

GRACE EVERGREEN

BY EDGAR WAYNE.



THERE is a sombre beauty in the autumnal landscape which finds its way to the heart that even the summer glows have failed to move. While each succeeding day repeats its greenness and its promise, we are disinclined to pause and enjoy; but feeling that "to-morrow will be as this day, and yet more abundant," we look to the future, instead of prizing the present. But when every breath of wind detaches and floats to our feet some fragment of the gorgeous picture around us—when leaf after leaf of the brilliant foliage is stripped from the trees, we see and feel—*THE END.*

The scene was in perfect and melancholy, yet cheerful keeping with the thoughts of a matronly personage who pursued alone, and as with no positive purpose a lonely ramble. Now she gazed on the beautiful landscape, as turns in the road, or openings in the trees presented new views, from the hill around which her road wandered; now she stooped to admire some tiny moss, or to pick up and examine some curious pebble—not less curious because common. Now the fantastic roots of some old tree caught her attention—and now the abrupt banks of a wild stream challenged such youthful impulses as time had spared in her heart. She longed to bound down, and skip a cross on the tempting stepping-stones—but a step or two reminded her of—rheumatism!—and she paused.

Oh, most unpoetical and unromantic! Rheumatism! A pico for the word—as ancient Pestol hath it. The wise, that is to say the refined, call it *neuralgia*. But disguise it as thou wilt—still twinge and torture and sleepless nights and daily premonitions, whether summed as a noun collective under one name or another, from a bitter draught—or lead to many such—unless indeed you scorn allopathy, and take medicaments in pallets of sugar of milk. Miss Evergreen was strongly inclined to become a patroness of Hahnman.

Miss! the reader is ready to say—I thought you said your heroine was *matronly*. To be sure we did; but there are many women with whom good digestion wants an appetite, who remain in single blessedness, and still grow as unromantically unwieldy as if they were grandmothers. There is no charm in the monosyllable "Miss"

to ward off plathora and amplitude of weight, size and resistance. So Miss Evergreen felt, and sighed. But what was she wandering here for, upon this pleasant autumn afternoon—pleasant enough to be sure, but still remarkably bilious and rheumatic in the incipient mist which was gathering itself up slowly from the marches, to settle like a hood over the landscape at sundown?

Miss Evergreen was a pilgrim to the haunts of her youth. She had been absent from Bellview—oh, ever so long—and now she had returned to toy with the children of those whose childhood she had amused. If she deluded herself with the thought, while absent, that time had stood still with her, she found upon her return that it had galloped with her early acquaintances, and the conviction was forcing itself upon her mind that she was no longer young. Her age was reflected back from others, as from a mirror. She saw her own years in the grey hairs of those who were young ladies when she was a child, and, therefore, having passed her summer, she sympathized with autumn. "Heigh-ho!" she sighed, as she seated herself upon a recently decapitated stump—"heigh-ho!"

"Hum!" ejaculated a male voice at her elbow.

Miss Evergreen turned suddenly, and a pace or two from her stood a gentleman with his hat in hand making a very profound bow, which he repeated as Miss Evergreen rose—blushing certainly—though her fair and fat, round face laughed all over, pitted into as many dimples, as there are islands in the St. Lawrence—and they are said to be a thousand—more or less. "Put on your hat, Ned," said she, for the gentleman remained still uncovered—"put on your hat, old gentleman, or you'll certainly take cold!"

"Still the same mad-cap as ever," replied the gentleman, complying. "But how do you do—Mrs.—or Miss?"

"Miss, if you please," said she, with a profound courtesy, which flattered the dead leaves for a radius of six feet outside of the ample circumference of her drapery. "Miss Evergreen forever!"

A breeze along the hill-side an avant courier of November eddied the leaves as she rose, and they danced off down the pathway.

"So fled the hopes of our youth," said he, with a smile.

"Upon my word you *are* tipped with grey," said Miss Evergreen, with an affectation of great concern. "You should not have ventured out without an over-coat!" And the two stood looking at each other till silence became awkward, and they relieved the monotony with a hearty laugh a *little* forced. Caw! caw! responded a flock of crows, disturbed by such unusual echoes, and the two old youths laughed again—louder than before.

"Miss Evergreen," said he, at length, "do you know what tree these vandals have cut down? Do you know what stump you have been reclining upon?"

"I suppose," said she, smiling, "*you* sang 'Woodman spare!' to them."

"I might," he answered, "had you been here to make a duet of it. In youth it sheltered us *both*. It was our old trysting tree, where you promised——"

"And you pledged," said she, interrupting him. "There are two of us foresworn! But, as the phrase goes, you have the advantage of me. You know I am *Miss*—but *Mr.* does not tell me whether I am talking to another woman's husband, or not."

"I am the father of six children."

"Goodness!"

"Of which you should have been the mother!"

"Gracious!" said Miss Evergreen, sitting down on the stump again—"six children! And pray who and how is your wife?"

"She is dead."

Farther trifling ceased between the couple who had so strangely renewed an old acquaintance. Miss Evergreen naturally wondered within herself, whether, had they twain kept their promise, and become one, she should have left to him thus early the sole direction of her little ones. And he said within himself that had he married her, he would not now be without a help meet. There are strange thoughts in every heart. The prudent conceal them—the foolish speak all—and the difference, we suspect, between those whom the world regards as wise, and those whom it pities as deficient, is more in the wisdom of concealment than in any inherent difference in the properties of mind, or the qualities of thought.

The two returned to the village together—very busy in conversation—constrained in fact, though laboring to be free; for both were anxious to seem perfectly at ease, and unconcerned. Every body who has made the effort to do this—as who has not—knows how difficult it is. There was no lack of words—none of questions—none of

answers; and there certainly was not at the close of the interview, that disposition to avoid each other which there would have been, save for their accidental encounter.

The gentleman did not suffer the acquaintance which had been recommenced to die out for want of attention. He was a very frequent visitor during the few weeks Miss Evergreen remained in Bellview—only, he said out of politeness! and a natural desire to make the most of the society of an old friend—whose value, as he ventured one day to tell her, he had never till now, half appreciated.

"Now, Ned, Ned," she answered, "tell me, does not that sort of talk border a very little on the ridiculous? You, the sworn husband of another, to talk of your appreciation of my value? *De*-preciation you mean, or you would never have behaved in the heartless manner you did! I declare I ought to be pouting at you now, instead of receiving you with any pretence of cordiality. It is time that we dropped this renewal of acquaintance, if you are beginning your old sentimentalities!"

But he did not drop the acquaintance—nor the "sentimental review" of which Miss Evergreen professed such horror. Men gain in experience as they grow older, and become almost as great adepts, at sixty, in affairs of the heart, as a woman is at sixteen, by intuition. And our hero had a very happy faculty of making himself agreeable, as Miss Evergreen had learned of old. So she went back to her friends with the feeling that the meeting with her old friend at Bellview had certainly added very much to the pleasure of the visit. Nothing was said of their ever meeting again. He did not even ask her permission to write to her. The fact was that both of them had outlived their nonsense. There are seasons in life for everything; and an old couple might with quite as much wisdom return to marbles and doll-babies, grace hoops and bats and balls, as to attempt to do over again the small talk of an interchange of *billet-doux*. There were *some* temptations to wander on his part. He wrote her a *business* letter—setting forth that as winter was setting in, and he was setting up stoves, if she had seen any new and desirable improvements, he should be very much obliged if she would apprise him—she being a resident in town, &c., &c. And the man actually did send this epistle!

Miss Evergreen quietly laughed half an hour by the clock. And then she took a stove man's circular, and enclosed it, with her card, in an envelope, to Edward Pruyte, Esq. And when that gentleman received it, he laughed no less;

acknowledging her to be one of the most provoking of women! Here was as convenient an opportunity as could possibly have been offered her to reply—opening thereupon duply, treply, quadruply, quintuply, and so on, till all should end in two cards in one envelope, with the words “at home” neatly engraved on one of them.

There was nothing for it but to carry the war into Africa. So he gave out to his six children that he was going to town to—buy stoves. And one fine winter morning as Mrs. Evergreen sat in her nice little room in a quiet boarding-house in Walnut street, working as much juvenility as it would bear into a nice little cap, the servant brought up Mr. Edward Pruytle’s card—in an envelope with that same stove circular.

There was no one but him in the drawing-room. They met with smiles and blushes, for the “renewal of the acquaintance” was becoming more interesting, and, at the same time, more embarrassing. After the usual interchange of compliments, Mr. Pruytle said, “will Miss Evergreen do me the favor to help select my stoves?” “Preposterous!” said the lady.

And so indeed it was. What could *she* know of stoves—she who had lived on in single blessedness and boarding-house independence all her days? Then Mr. Pruytle, forgetting business, chatted a few moments upon indifferent, thence changing to different subjects—until at length they settled upon one, in under tones, in which there was no indifference. The result proved, moreover, that there was no difference upon the topic whatever it was—for they gave in that quiet corner the most modest and graceful yet unmistakable evidence of united opinion. And he took his hat immediately after, and walked away from the house with a step much more cheerful and elastic than he had entered it.

On the morrow Mr. Pruytle called again. We should have mentioned, by the way, that the evening previous was spent by the two together; and we may add that Miss Evergreen was not at all surprised when the servant came up and advised her that “that gentleman from the country had called again.” And when he proposed to-day, “let us go out and select *our* stoves”—there was an easy assurance in his manner, which showed

that another and graver proposal had paved the way for this. Miss Evergreen demurred a little, but that other acceptance, made this easy, and they walked together.

While out much more shopping suggested itself, and Grace Evergreen was surprised with what cleverness she could buy for little girls. And even boys wants were not so very far above her comprehension, for she found it necessary to correct him many times in his wild purchases. She knew what would wear, and what would not, and only wondered that the man had not already beggared himself, if that was the way he bought.

The end of all was that Mr. Pruytle made a weeks’ stay where he had purposed a day only—and that he went home but to return almost immediately. He brought his oldest daughter down with him—a fine girl of fourteen, and placed her with her new mother, and he had, moreover, prepared his whole house for the change that he proposed. It cannot be said that it was unexpected to the good people of Bellview—for gossip had been very busy ever since that October afternoon. Christmas made a fixed fact of what had before been rumor, and Mrs. Pruytle spent her New Year’s in her own new home.

Well—what came of it? Not bliss *superlative*—but a life of quiet and unecstatic happiness. In this there was no disappointment—but when young people marry in raptures, the dull realities of life bring them unwillingly to their senses. Our couple had reached years of discretion—and ceased to look for perfection in each other—or indeed in any human being. Even the six children Mrs. Pruytle found were much less difficult to manage than she had supposed, and they found that the bug-bear of a step-mother, which some considerate souls had been at no small pains to describe to them, must be a very different person from their new mother whom they loved so dearly.

Thus did Mr. and Mrs. Pruytle verify their early impression that they were designed for each other, and in these sober years repair the error of their youth—if it was an error. And thus, in our private opinion, they proved themselves sensible people, who understood how to consult their own happiness.

THE FLIGHT.

BY JAMES H. DANA.

It was a moonless night, but the stars, like countless gems, sparkled in the blue vault of heaven, when a party of travellers paused by a wayside fountain, in one of the most romantic counties of England. The cavalcade consisted of two principal persons, with a train of mounted attendants. Both were disguised as pilgrims, but beneath the long robe of one peeped out the gilded spurs of a knight, and from under the hood of the other shone the bright eyes of a lady, young, noble, and beautiful. The followers were a single female servant, and a small escort of men-at-arms.

A more picturesque spot could not be conceived. On either side rocks rose almost perpendicularly, leaving only a narrow defile between, so that when the travellers halted they completely blocked up the road. Behind, however, the landscape swelled out into a plain, commanded by an elevation to the right, on which stood a castle, the lights from which streamed brightly across the prospect. Right in the centre of the pass, and at a little more than a man's height from the ground, was a rudely carved figure of a boy holding a shell, from out of which poured a constant stream of water, that, falling into a basin below, invited the stranger to refreshment and repose.

"You are not tired, Geraldine, are you?" said the knight to his companion, in a tone that betrayed the lover. "You can ride further?"

The lady looked confidently up into the speaker's face, and answered, "oh, no, Sir Robert, I can ride all night, if it should be necessary. But I was in hopes," she added, after a pause, "that the castle, on the hill yonder, would have afforded us refuge."

"Alas!" returned her companion, "that is the fastness of as bold a Lancastrian as ever drew

sword for a usurping line. To have sought refuge there would have been to run into the lion's jaws. In fact, all this region is in the hands of Queen Margaret's friends, and there will be no safety for us till we draw nigher to London."

The period to which our story refers was that unsettled one, known in English history as that of the wars of the Roses. The bloody battle, in which the Duke of York had been captured and executed, had taken place; but the son of the murdered prince, though seated on the throne, had not yet entirely crushed the faction of Lancaster. It was a time when family was arrayed against family, and the dearest ties often ruthlessly severed. The Lady Geraldine, for example, had been born and bred in the Yorkist faith, but her father having fallen in the disastrous field of Wakefield, and their being no male heir of her house to protect her, her person had been seized by a maternal uncle, a bitter Lancastrian, who openly boasted that he would marry her to one of his own party, and thus carry the weight of her vast possessions over to the side of Queen Margaret. But such a union would have been repulsive to the Lady Geraldine, as a confirmed Yorkist, even if her heart had not already selected a mate. High spirited, and full of resources, she began to plot how to escape, instead of yielding herself to fate, as many of her sex would have done. Her foster-sister, who had subsequently become her tire-woman, was allowed to remain with her, in the honorable captivity to which she was consigned; and she now employed this faithful creature to open a communication with Sir Robert Gifford, the gallant knight to whom she had promised herself, with her father's free consent, and whose wife she already considered herself in the eyes of heaven. This was no easy matter in that disturbed day,

especially as Sir Robert was in a different part of the kingdom. But fortune, after many trials, proved kind. A letter from the Lady Geraldine reached him at London, where he was on duty with the king; and abandoning everything else, he set out immediately to the rescue of his plighted bride. By what stratagems the lovers managed to meet and arrange a scheme of escape, it would delay us too much to narrate; it is sufficient for our story to say that, in the disguise of pilgrims, they had finally fled, and thus far had apparently escaped pursuit. The way had been long however, so long that nothing but necessity could have induced the knight to propose, as he had, continuing their journey.

But their flight was destined to be more speedily resumed than even he had intended. The horses were still panting, when a sentinel, whom Sir Robert had posted at the entrance of the pass in the rear, rode hastily up, and announced that a party of armed men, evidently in pursuit, was advancing rapidly across the plain. In an instant the tired beasts were watered, the men-at-arms were ordered to their saddles, and the palfrey of the Lady Geraldine brought up.

"You tremble, dearest," said the knight, as he stooped to take the little foot in his hand; adding, as he swung his companion lightly into the saddle, "never fear. Your horse is one of rare speed and bottom, and, if the worst comes to the worst, I will make a stand at some favorable spot, and send you forward with one of my best mounted followers."

But the Lady Geraldine, who had now seated herself firmly in the saddle, and had gathered up the reins with a hand that showed her a skilful horseman, pushed back the hood from her fair face at these concluding words, and gazing on the knight, with tender reproach, answered,

"Nay, not so. It was but a moment's weakness, that tremor, and it has passed forever. Captured I will not be, I know, while you live; and parted I am resolved not to be, come what may. Therefore stay by me, and, if we escape, well, but, if overtaken and overpowered, let me die with you. Never, never," she exclaimed, earnestly; "will I consent to fall alive into the hands of my uncle, and be forced, for force they will use, into that detestable union."

"By my knightly honor, by my mother's memory, by the immaculate mother of God," said the knight, lifting his mailed hand to heaven, "captured alive you shall never be; but, since it is your prayer, with this good sword will I take your life, when I can no longer defend you. In death, at least, we shall be united."

There was no leisure to parley further, for, by this time, the entire cavalcade had mounted; and, at a sign from Sir Robert, the little troop started into a brisk trot, which soon changed to a gallop. For a while the party rode on in silence. The pass was left, a valley crossed, and an opposite ascent begun; yet still the fugitives maintained as rapid a pace as was consistent with the necessity of preserving their horses; and they began to hope, in consequence, that they were outstripping their pursuers. But when they had gained the top of the ascent, Sir Robert saw, on looking back, that the enemy was close behind, and that from being mounted on either fresher or faster horses, they were rapidly overtaking him.

He now knew that escape was impossible, at least without a struggle, and, like a heroic knight, he prepared to do his devoir, notwithstanding the odds. To the Lady Geraldine he announced his resolution, and solicited her prayers, telling her that she was right, and that it was wiser she should remain than attempt flight; for, even if she could get off unobserved, her solitary attendant, he said, would be no protection to her, in the disturbed condition of the country. He shuddered, indeed, to think of what might happen if she should fall into the hands of any of the lawless marauders, who infested the debatable ground between the two armies.

"Farewell then," said the Lady Geraldine, with a tremulous voice, "till victory is won. Or, in the event of a defeat, farewell forever. Remember your oath!"

"I do not forget it," answered the knight. "But God surely will not render its execution necessary." With these words he left her side, and galloped to the mouth of the mountain gorge, where he proposed to make a stand.

The Lady Geraldine clasped her hands, and watched him till he disappeared. Scarcely had his tall form vanished, when she heard his war-cry, which was immediately responded to by that of their pursuers; and, on the instant, the skirmish began. Her maid lost all presence of mind, when the clash of arms thus arose, and commenced sobbing piteously. Indeed it was far more terrible for those two women, to be condemned silently to watch the struggle, than if they had participated in the fight: for suspense, when we are inactive, becomes intolerable beyond description. For a full quarter of an hour this uncertainty continued. At last, however, the war-cry of Sir Robert ceased, while that of his opponents swelled louder, and directly his horse was seen galloping wildly by, riderless and bleeding.

The Lady Geraldine had sustained herself heroically, through all her doubts and fears, but at this sight, which assured her not only that her lover was dead, but that no friendly dagger was left to save her from dishonor, she swooned away.

When she recovered consciousness she was lying on the bare ground, with her head supported on a manly knee. She looked up, at first, and smiled, for the face of Sir Robert gazed tenderly down on her; but remembering immediately his riderless steed, she feared that what she saw was the illusion of delirium. She closed her eyes, therefore, with a groan.

But a hand now pressed her own, and a joyful voice, which she recognized, cried, "thank God and the saints, she lives: she is not dead." And, at that joyful sound, she opened her eyes and smiled again, for she now knew it was a reality.

"But how do I see you here," was her first words, when she gained strength to speak, "when I beheld your horse flying riderless from the field?"

"I dismounted, dearest," was the reply, "because my poor steed was sadly wounded, and I feared he would eventually fall with me. St. George gave me, too, the victory on foot, which he had denied to me in the saddle. By a fortunate blow, I brought the horse of my principal

opponent to the ground, and had his master at my mercy in consequence. He surrendered, when my dagger was at his throat, and his followers, beholding his fate, turned and fled. And who, think you, it was? None other than your suitor himself, who is now my captive, and held at ransom."

The Lady Geraldine, though she had fallen from her saddle, on fainting, had fortunately received no injury; and was soon able to resume her journey, which was prosecuted successfully, and at greater comfort, for there was now no longer danger of pursuit.

On the third day the fugitives reached London, where the court was then held, and the Lady Geraldine immediately sought the protection of certain noble ladies, relatives of her own. But it was not long, you may suppose, that she remained their guest.

Within a week there was a blithe bridal and a blither bride; and we need not say that the latter was the Lady Geraldine. The king himself gave our heroine away, advancing the bridegroom, at the same time, to the rank which her deceased father had held, so that, when the happy couple rose from receiving the nuptial benediction, it was as Earl and Countess de Rouen, a title which their descendants still hold in the proud peerage of England.

OUR NEW YEAR'S CALLS: OR, THE CONFESSIONS OF A NOVICE.

BY ELLA RODMAN.

NINE o'clock, A. M.—Commenced the day with moralizing. Had some doubts whether the evening would not find me exclaiming:

"Alas! for the rarity
Of Christian charity
Under the sun!"

for grandmother gave me some very excellent advice last night, and I know that when people have nothing else to give they are very apt to give that—and Susan has thrown out no sort of hint respecting any intended present. Well, *I* have done *my* duty, at any rate. I have finished Susan's purse, and grandmother's sofa cushions—and, like the novel heroines, when they don't know what else to do, I will leave the rest to Fate.

I have concluded to keep a journal of to-day's transactions; for although our expected visitors will doubtless be, like angel's visits, "few and far between," instead of sitting down, on New Year's night, to mourn for the barrenness of the land, I intend that we shall make ourselves merry with this report of the day's occurrences.

With what a sneer would it be read by the fashionable city belles, whose rooms are filled, without cessation, from twelve A. M. to twelve P. M! But, alas! we in the country are frequently reminded of the fact that "many a flower is doomed to blush unseen." More frequently, indeed, than is altogether agreeable—for I, being unfortunately fond of company and visiting, and other such vanities, am sometimes drawn in to accompany grandmother when she goes to take tea with the Miss Ebbetts', in the forlorn hope of extracting amusement from nothing. It is with the greatest difficulty that I manage to keep my eyes open; and my behavior on such occasions always reminds me of the model young lady of old times, who was "so quiet and lady-like in company, that they were often obliged to hold a feather under her nose, to see if she really breathed at all!"

That description might answer for Susan—although she is not *quite* such a piece of still life; she likes a little fun now and then—but it is very quiet fun. Two sisters could not be more

different. As for poor me, there is a constant song of "Katy did" all through the house. I often think, in the early autumn evenings, that the insects outside must have caught it from grandmother, and the rest of them. Susan never does anything in the least out of the way; she has a great horror of being different from other people, and takes as much pains to eradicate the faintest sparks of originality as though they were so many grey hairs. I am constantly lectured by grandmother—I am frowned at by Susan—I am laughed at by everybody; and yet I remain a young lady very much addicted to adventures and romantic incidents, and somewhat disposed to make a good deal out of nothing.

I began, as I said, with moralizing. Determined to commence the year in a proper manner; I returned from the land of dreams just as the clock struck six; and having, with a spasmodic effort, twisted myself out of bed, I looked forth on the outer world. A mild, clear day, more suited to genial spring than dreary winter—no snow on the ground, or icicles sparkling on the old house-eaves—nothing without to remind one that it is the first day of January; the grass under the old trees that cast such long shadows in summer time is fresh and beautiful—the sky is that of October—and I almost expected to hear the birds strike up their summer melody.

But soon a "Happy New Year" from Susan roused me from these fancies, and after we had exchanged the New Year's kiss, I presented my purse, and Susan gave me the prettiest of bracelets, made of her own hair, and wrought by her own fair fingers. The gold bands and clasps were probably procured on her last visit to the city. Dear Susan! I value the present still more, knowing, as I do, that no goose was ever more averse to having his feathers plucked than thou to part with that long, silky hair which, wreathed around thy head in a bright coronal, gives thee the look of a young queen. But there is still plenty left, and right glad am I to see that no eyes but thine own could ever detect the robbery.

Having embraced that dear grandmother, who has been to us orphans a more than mother for

so many years, we each received a beautifully bound Bible and prayer-book, and then all three descended to the breakfast-room.

Here, somewhat to our surprise, we found Cousin Eben, a youth of tender years, who had also done violence to his natural inclinations, and contrived to be up in season on New Year's morning. He kissed us both in a cousinly manner, and then stood blushing at his own performance.

Eben certainly improves astonishingly, and would make a very respectable beau where beaux are scarce; but I would not bend even the width of a hair from my own self-respect to accept any attentions from him that were not strictly cousinly. And if he did fancy either of us, his choice would most likely fall upon Susan—she is so much more regularly handsome and attractive in every way, and she is not near so foolish as I am. Grandmother often observes that it is not at all necessary to publish the fact of my having an upper story to let—chiefly, I believe, because she considers the information as altogether superfluous.

At the breakfast table we discussed the subject of our probable calls, and the probable places at which Cousin Eben could make his debut in the character of a visitor.

"It is of no use to dress," said Susan, "for all that will come—I know exactly who they are. Old Paul Biggles, he is always a standing dish—he will walk in and say exactly the same things that he said last year—Doctor Hepburn, who will walk in and say nothing—and Mrs. Wedgfield, who will tell us that a woman's place is at home. The country around is remarkably unproductive."

Eben laughed, and we all laughed, but I endeavored to persuade Susan that things might improve.

"There is no knowing," said I, "who may come—and at any rate it is best to be dressed and ready. Every one has a right to call on New Year's day."

"And 'every one' will, doubtless, avail himself of it," replied Susan.

There was a name I would have spoken, but I scarcely dared to hope that he would come; and the subject being dismissed we turned to Eben. Grandmother smiled and listened, but she gave us no encouragement to expect an uncommon invasion of the animal man; and having soon failed in the importing line, we turned to our only export. Eben is bashful—at that unlucky period when a boy is nothing in particular; and we now endeavored to prop up his falling spirits for his first New Year's calls.

"There are the Miss Smiths," observed my grandmother.

"Yes, answered Eben, "but I should have to do all the talking there—and"—added he, stammeringly, "I had thought of two or three things to say, if there was any one to make answers—but they wouldn't last long with the Miss Smith's."

I tried my best not to laugh at this parrot-like style of conversation, but a command over the risible faculties is what I do not possess; and finding that it *would* come, I endeavored to impose it upon the company for a cough—but poor Eben's reproachful look seemed to say: "Et tu, Brute!" and instantly I was sober again.

"Why not call on the Bricksters?" I inquired.

It was now Eben's turn to laugh. "Which one?" said he, "the *old*, old body, or the *young* old body?"

Neither mother nor daughter was exactly of a suitable age; and I fell into a fit of musing on the alarming scantiness of the neighborhood.

Eben departed to his own room; and as I now hear him trying to pound on a pair of difficult boots, he has probably concluded to seek his fortune, notwithstanding the somewhat discouraging prospect.

Eleven o'clock.—"To dress, or not to dress, *that* is the question?"

"*Not* to dress, decidedly," says Susan, in the same tone that annihilated Garrick's poor protegee, when delivering the above line in its proper version.

But I am made of more hopeful stuff; and I take out my chocolate-colored silk dress and lay it on the bed, just as though I expected an actual New Year's day. Grandmother and I have arranged the wine and cake—the parlor is dusted to the very last extreme—and nothing remains to be done but deck the divinities who are to adorn it. A remark of grandmother's has just set me a thinking—rather an unusual circumstance, by the way.

"You are young yet, my child," said she, in her affectionate manner, "and may see a great many very different New Year's from this. You will then look back to the memory of such with a smile."

And why should it not be as grandmother says? Five years hence, perhaps, I may be in a far different scene—one year hence—and what shall it be? Hereupon arose a phantom that I have often conjured up at eventide, beneath the dim, grey veil that floats between dusk and candle-light. And the phantom showed me the interior of an apartment familiar to my imagination; a bright, cheerful fireside—pictures on the

dark, panelled walls—a heavy sweep of drapery at the one large window that looks forth on a noble lawn, and the tall trees seem resting almost against the window-pane—far away extends a wavy line of hill and dale and mansion—and within—oh! there are figures at the fireside that memory greets with an “auld lang syne.”

Foolish dreaming! I have come back again to the chocolate colored dress.

I have given the finishing touch to Susan's beautiful hair—which I *would* adorn with my only tea-rose, in spite of her opposition; and I must now employ myself upon the much less interesting subject of my own *chevelure*.

Two o'clock.—As there has been, for the last hour or so, a dead calm, as far as visitors are concerned, I have run up to enjoy a laugh in my own room, and add a few mites to my journal.

Grandmother had not yet come down, and Susan and I stood looking out of the back window, absorbed in contemplating the almost summer-like beauty of the prospect without, when the sound of the great brass knocker, as it came down with a terrific noise, set our hearts a fluttering with the recollection that this was New Year's day, and that was visitor No. 1.

Like actors at the sound of the prompter's bell, we rushed into places, and sat side by side on the sofa. Fearful that this might be deemed rather stiff, I sprang to the mantel, and set the large music-box agoing. This I considered quite a lively idea; and it was not till some time afterward that I recognised the tune of “All hail, the conquering hero comes!” Miranda, Miss Higgins, in country parlance, took an endless time to get to the door; but as the sound of footsteps approached, my nervousness increased. It seemed a fearful ordeal, to be seated there in evident expectation of visitors, and be obliged to act up to it. In desperation I seized the chequer-board. My elder sister—elder only by two years—was all this time as cool as a piece of ice from Rockland lake; nothing *could* disturb that mild equanimity of her's; but in my eagerness to arrange the game before the visitor entered, I dropped the entire concern, and the floor was sprinkled with black and white wafers on a mammoth scale.

I arose from my knees, flushed and embarrassed; and my half-bashful glance met the countenance of Cousin Eben, somewhat uncomfortable under the consciousness of his Sunday-best. I sank against the arm of the sofa, and indulged in the heartiest laugh I had enjoyed that day. Even Susan smiled; and Eben, imagining himself the cause of our merriment, began to blush, and look very dignified; but the

cordiality of our reception soon reassured him, and quite aided the success of his little scheme to fancy himself a mere acquaintance, and make us a New Year's visit as though he did not belong to the house at all.

We were all very merry, when grandmother entered; and I now experienced a most delightful feeling of safety, for grandmother always knows just what to say, and just what to do; and things, I felt convinced, would now go on right. Eben, it seems, had wandered about, and looked in at the windows, and then concluded to wear off the rust of a first appearance in the bosom of his own family. I did the honors with the cake-basket, but its contents were politely declined; possibly the fact of a visit to the kitchen, while I was engaged in compounding them, may have influenced the refusal.

After a reasonable call, Cousin Eben departed; and we were left “alone in our glory,” to sit in state and look at each other. I gazed at Susan as I would at a beautiful picture to which I had given the finishing touches, and thought, could any one resist the fascinations of so lovely a creature? A half mournful thought floated through my mind at the remembrance of Mr. Castleroy, but I dismissed it as an unworthy visitor; and then I called up my phantom room, and put my sister's figure in *my* place, and felt satisfied. I loved to think of it so; and I sat dwelling upon the fancy with all a child's delight over a treasured plaything.

The old knocker sounded again—I heard footsteps approaching—and the name that I had just repeated to myself almost trembled on my lips—when I looked up to catch the eye of old Paul Biggles. The reaction scarcely permitted me to greet him civilly; and I never fully realized until that moment how impossible it must be for any woman ever to marry *him*. A conclusion in which he by no means joins; indeed, for so long a time has he been represented as “looking out for a wife,” that he is really a sort of wandering Jew in that respect, and, like the Dutchman with the fearful cork leg, seems destined to go the same round forever. It is the habit of Paul Biggles to smile upon woman until he has, as he imagines, raised her to a sufficient pitch of hopefulness—and then, afraid of committing himself, he executes the manœuvre known in cartmen's phrase as “backing out.” As there is nothing to support this wonderful estimation of himself but a back-ground of money-bags, old Paul Biggles is, in my opinion, a particular horror—and yet, to use a somewhat hackneyed expression, shackled by the conventionalisms of society I cannot even enjoy the satisfaction of telling him so!

For the last five years he has made a regular practice of inquiring my age, and when that question is answered, he asks if I can make bread. On my replying in the affirmative, he remarks: "Fine girl!—you'll be fit to get married one of these days," in a tone which implies that this is decidedly the chief end of woman, and the highest rung in her ladder of felicity. In what contrast rise up the figure and conversation of Castleroy! But, alas! as well might I conjure up one of Titian's angels.

Mr. Biggles condescended to test the quality of one cake, and then came the question that I had expected:

"Did I make it?"

"Yes."

"How old was I?"

"Eighteen."

"Eighteen! Is it possible! Why you ought to have been married long ago!"

Hereupon I was drawn by Mr. Biggles to the back window—ostensibly to view the scenery—but to my great annoyance, he made me an offer of his hand and heart upon the spot. I felt actually degraded by the compliment, and as I thought of Mr. Castleroy, could have spurned the anxious suitor with my foot. I scarcely remember what I said—there was a sort of mist before me—but I have distinct recollections of the figure of Paul Biggles marching irefully out through the front door. I never felt more disposed to "speed the parting guest."

My grandmother is surprised; Susan laughs, and says that it is a good beginning—what occurs on the first day of the year is very apt to be repeated on the following ones. Then I may calculate on a renewal of Mr. Biggles' offer diurnally from now until next New Year. A pleasant prospect, truly! Susan observes that he is very rich, and then looks thoughtful. Is it possible, my sister—but no, I cannot believe it. I am only glad that the offer was made to me—I would not have her so insulted.

From one till two, an unbroken calm.

Doctor Hepburn and Mr. Widgefield came in together; quite a bright idea, for the two just about make one. The doctor confined himself to my grandmother and Susan; and Mr. Widgefield, perhaps considering me the most likely one of the three to wander out of my proper sphere, favored me with his usual tirades upon woman.

"Woman," said he, "my dear Miss Hamilton, is naturally the inferior animal—she was originally taken from man, you know."

I replied a little maliciously that "those must have been 'the good, old times'—it would

be better for her were she oftener 'taken from man' now-a-days."

Mr. Widgefield opened his round eyes at me in extreme astonishment: and anxious to nip such rebellious sentiments in the bud, he had just collected himself for one annihilating effort, when Doctor Hepburn, having exhausted his small stock of small-talk, gave the departing signal, and my opponent was obliged to defer his victory.

Next came two youths, prototypes of Cousin Eben, who shook hands with us as though they intended to do it now and forever more. Poor fellows! no wonder that they made such a lengthy business of it—they had concentrated all their energies in that one effort; and they clung to our hands as the "man overboard" clings to the rope that is thrown to rescue him from a watery grave.

But there must be an end to everything; and they sank down, apparently frightened at their own temerity. One of them accepted our offer of refreshment, and spilled his wine on the carpet; the other leaned back in his chair, and lost his balance, and both soon took themselves off; leaving me in convulsions of laughter—Susan provoked—and grandmother almost as much amused as myself.

Eben every now and then made his appearance between the acts to compare notes. He had determined that his charity, as far as visiting was concerned, should end, as well as begin at home; for, finding it impossible to screw up his courage to the sticking point, he met with some old cronies—"real good fellows," to use his own term—and spent the day in promenading with them up and down the village.

Four o'clock.—I am thinking of the commencement of an early letter of mine: "I take up my pen to inform you that I have nothing to say"—still, were I not now in hopes of doing rather better than that I should not take it up at all. This farce of New Year's day is now rapidly drawing to a close, and as yet no Mr. Castleroy. True, I have seen him but twice; but then his place is so near to ours, and his manner was so kind on that well-remembered afternoon, that I but think he will come yet.

How I love to recall that first meeting! Stories of the recluse had reached us before, and exaggerated accounts of his appearance and manners; until I expected to see a morose-looking individual, with a gruff voice, and unpromising mien. Susan and I had set forth for a walk through the woods, beautiful in the decay of autumn; and for some time we passed on through the scattered leaves and chestnut-burs—the silence unbroken, save by our own voices.

We were just debating the question of the exact line where grandmother's property stopped, and Mr. Castleroy's began; and we walked on and on, farther than we had ever explored before, when suddenly the barking of a dog, and the appearance of a gentleman, who was leaning gracefully against a tree, quite absorbed in a book, roused us to the fact that we were trespassing on our neighbor's property.

A pair of dark, thoughtful eyes scanned us intently, at first, and then, coming politely forward, Mr. Castleroy introduced himself, and smilingly waived off our excuses. His voice had a touch of sadness, that always possesses for me an inexplicable interest; and yet the expression of his eyes tells plainly enough that there is a fund of humor in his composition, which has probably been clouded by adverse circumstances.

Those expressive eyes were bent with an admiring gaze on Susan's perfect face; but his courtesies were equally divided between us as he conducted us all through his grounds, and displayed to us every point of interest. He listened attentively whenever I spoke, but it was with a half smile; and I could plainly see that he regarded me as a sort of curiosity, and very much wondered what I would say next. I am accustomed to this manner, but it is very unpleasant; people often laugh when I am quite innocent of any such intention. Why can I not do as Susan does, who quietly follows the beaten track, and thus glides along with the current, without attracting observation or comment. I do not know how it is, but I am sure to say something queer before I am in the least aware of it.

On this afternoon, though, I was too busy listening to Mr. Castleroy to talk much myself; and that, I believe, is the wisest course I can take. And well was I repaid for my silence; but I do not think that Susan quite comprehended him—he is somewhat allegorical.

"Have you ever thought," said he, as we walked through the damp leaves, "of the uses of this emblematical fall and decay?"

His eye fell upon me: but Susan replied, as she turned aside the leaves with her foot: "It makes the ground very rich."

I said nothing, and the subject was changed. When next I glanced up, Mr. Castleroy was looking at Susan's hair, which the autumn sun was turning to burnished gold.

Mr. Castleroy left us at our own door—having declined our invitation to enter—with a promise of calling soon.

He has never yet been; but, much to our surprise, we encountered him again, in an entirely opposite direction. He is fond, he says, of solitary

ramblings; but he immediately attached himself to us, and, as before, left us at my grandmother's gate. This time he seemed determined to make me talk; and we kept up an animated conversation, while Susan seemed like a beautiful statue, endowed with the power of locomotion only. She says that she does not like Mr. Castleroy—he is so queer, and difficult to understand; but to me our new acquaintance seems like a rich mine in which I am constantly discovering new treasures.

How Susan will laugh at this! I am afraid that I cannot show my journal, after all.

Our New Year's calls seem likely to prove more numerous than we had anticipated. Looking forth from the window, I beheld a sort of human mosquito known as Mr. Tuinner, the schoolmaster, making directly for the premises. Mr. Tuinner's appearance and motions remind one exactly of the insect I have mentioned; he wears spectacles, I really believe, to give him an important look, for he has been frequently detected looking above and below them; and as he is a would-be wit, he lashes every subject and object in the most unmerciful manner. Fortunately for humanity in general, these random shots of his do no more damage than a child's plaything arrows.

"Good morning, ladies," said Mr. Tuinner, as he entered.

He would have said "females" had he dared—this being his usual manner of designating the sex; but on New Year's day people are generally on their good behavior.

"I wish you," said he, "many happy returns of the day."

We thanked him properly, and Mr. Tuinner made rapid strides toward the cake-basket. Susan interposed in time to save the basket from his grasp, and gracefully presented it. Having fished for a piece to suit his taste, he examined the delicate compound as though it were a fragment of granite or quartz; and remarked, as he helped himself to a second slice, that Adam and Eve would, doubtless, have scorned our style of provisions.

"Not more than we should scorn theirs," observed my grandmother, with a smile.

Mr. Tuinner shook his head mournfully; it was a sad thing, this degeneration; and I thought, as his eye fell upon us three descendants of the ancient culprit, that he looked as though he could have punished us with right good will for Eve's misdemeanor.

I wished to draw him out a little.

"I think, Mr. Tuinner," said I, "that Adam was a very great baby—his character has always

appeared to me in a particularly disadvantageous light.. How cowardly and detestable is his defence of himself: 'Behold, the woman whom thou gavest to be with me, *she tempted me and I did eat!*' Eve would never have thrown the blame upon him, had he been ever so guilty."

"Why, Miss Katy?" exclaimed the astonished schoolmaster, "I never heard a young person express herself in that decided manner before! Eve was the culprit, and she should have been punished."

His comprehension was but an echo that could send forth only this one sound; and provoked to have wasted ammunition upon so inefficient an antagonist, I bit my lip, and sat in proud silence.

"I passed by the hotel, just now," said Mr. Tuinner, "and two or three young bloods from the city were just hitching their vehicles in front of the door; one of them wore a black moustache—he had probably put his upper lip in mourning for his brains."

Mr. Tuinner tried very hard not to laugh at his own wit; and we kept from laughing without trying at all.

Having failed in a lighter vein, he made a journey to the pyramids; and plied his heavy subject so perseveringly that the Egyptian darkness fell upon us all—and we sat with benumbed faculties, while Mr. Tuinner assumed his school-room manner, and gave us good cause to regret that

"One small head contained e'en all he knew!"

Having had quite enough of the schoolmaster abroad, we saw the door close upon him with a feeling of ineffable relief.

A shuffling sound in the hall announced an arrival that seemed difficult of entrance; and on the opening of the door appeared the figure of Josiah Stiggins, almost pushed in by Miranda. The expression of this youth's countenance reminds me of that favorite remark of Mrs. Gummidge's: "I'm a poor, lone, born critter, and everything goes contrary with me, and I go contrary with every one." He is a country edition of Toots, and Susan is evidently the Florence Dombey who enthalls him.

I could see the whole picture of his first setting forth: how his mother had scolded, threatened and coaxed him from the fireside; how she had told him to try and learn something of society by calling upon the Miss Hamiltons; and how she had enjoined him to pay particular attention and respect to Mrs. Hamilton—which admonition he now obeyed by turning his eyes as far from her as possible.

Nature had certainly made a mistake in providing him with a pair of hands; he evidently considered them quite superfluous articles, and felt extremely puzzled how to dispose of them to the best advantage. Now they were placed in his pocket—then crossed before him—then dangling at his sides; and during the whole of his visit the poor fellow looked as though he were undergoing a severe penance.

I wanted to relieve his embarrassment.

"My cake," said I, as I presented the basket, "seems to last—eating does not diminish it."

"Yes," said he, with a desperate effort, "like the widow Cruse's oil!"

The cake-basket nearly dropped from my hand at this biblical allusion; and even grandmother and Susan with difficulty refrained from laughing. Poor Josiah was not quite *au fait* in the history of the Bible, but he was so evidently contented under the consciousness of having said a good thing that it would have been absolutely cruel to give him a hint of his error.

Josiah's visit was in proportion to the length of time it must have taken to get him forth; he staid and staid, and, instead of making a New Year's call, had evidently come to spend the day. Conversation flagged; I made a few faint attempts, but the little flame that I could raise soon died out, and all was silent as Quaker meeting.

For two mortal hours did Josiah hang on; but at length he went with a sort of excuse that "his mother might want him:" as an apology for depriving us of so great a treasure. I glanced at Susan with a mirthful face, but her's bore only an expression of haughtiness; to think that *we* should be obliged to receive such visitors—and half sadly I thought of Mr. Castleroy.

With what delight I beheld the trim figure of Mr. Fonthill advancing up the walk! "Now," thought I, "for a treat, after the storm of stupidity with which we have been assailed."

Our bachelor friend looked genial and smiling—in perfect unison with the atmosphere; and the notice of his approach diffused a glow among the parlor inmates. No shuffling in the hall—no tripping and stumbling and drawing back—but a frank salutation on all sides, and a friendly smile to each and to all. A little bit of flattery to Susan and me shows that with respect to girls, at least, he considers "the smallest donations thankfully accepted."

"I thought," said he, "that it was the first of January—but these roses would seem to imply that summer has not yet vanished."

His manner of saying things gives point to the most empty compliment. It would seem to

be his especial mission to perambulate the earth for the purpose of collecting all the fun, as the bee gathers honey; for such mirth-moving stories, told with such happy humor, I never heard from any one but Mr. Fonthill.

"Do you think, Miss Katy," said he, as he tested the quality of my manufacture, "that you could make cake in any pans but your grandmother's?"

Rather puzzled at this form of address, I asked an explanation.

"My mother," said he, "often told the story of her mistake in this line. She had been brought up by a maiden aunt, with whom every thing went on with the regularity of clockwork; and cake and pies had been mixed in just such pans and dishes from time immemorial. There were no written receipts for these manufactures; it was 'the old blue cup twice filled with sugar'—'the large bent spoon three times full of butter'—and so on; in short, 'a thing full of this, and a thing full of that.' But in her younger days, my mother's cake and pies were quite famous throughout the neighborhood in which my aunt resided; my father therefore supposed that he had found quite a treasure in the house-keeping line. Judge of his surprise, when the first pies that greeted him in his new home were tough enough to dance on—the cake of the stuff that cannon-balls is made of—and my mother in the greatest surprise at the results of her skill. He began to think that the former good things he had eaten of her manufacture were like the pictures executed by the drawing-teacher, and passed off as the pupil's. 'Go and bring me Aunt Paty's blue cup, and large spoon,' said she, 'and you will not have to complain again.' These witch-like implements were not brought, but measured, and cake and pies were again at a premium."

I laughed in the utmost unconcern; for grandmother is a rigid disciple of Mrs. Glasse, and would as soon think of having anything made without an actual receipt, as of covering her pies with leather.

"I had the pleasure," said our guest, "of meeting Mr. Tuinner; and he informed me that there was sedition in the harem—Miss Kate Hamilton aspired to an equality with man! Truly, these are 'troubled times.'"

I wished to try Mr. Fonthill. "No—Mr. Tuinner was mistaken; the sex were quite satisfied with being men's superiors, without descending to the position of equals."

"No, Miss Katy," said our visitor, with a pleasant laugh, "don't you remember the story of the old farmer and his two oxen? The quiet

one received no comment whatever; but the ill-tempered, unruly animal was praised and recommended to all his friends until they asked him why he was so blind to its faults—why not praise the other, instead of this? 'The other one did not need it—its good conduct was quite manifest—but as everybody turned against the ugly one he was trying to retrieve its character. Now, just consider Mr. Tuinner the farmer, and Adam and Eve the oxen.'"

Mr. Fonthill was the only visitor whose departure we regretted; and as these are the only calling people of the village—the other "lords of creation" (?) in our vicinity being somewhat addicted to spending New Year's day in resting their stocking feet upon the mantel, and chewing the end which Sir Walter Raleigh added to the list of masculine accomplishments—we may now expect a cessation of our toils.

Eleven o'clock.—The evening was wearing on toward nine—Miranda had given indications of a resolution to go to bed—Susan had fallen asleep upon the sofa—and grandmother, having a bad headache, spoke of retiring to her own room. But I, not much relishing this prospect of total solitude, prevailed upon her to change her dress for a wrapper, and I stood by the parlor fire bathing her forehead with eau de cologne.

Was it an apparition? I almost thought so; for when I raised my head, there on the threshold stood Mr. Castleroy! The blaze of the fire had already drawn a burning heat to my cheeks; but over it all spread a quick glow as I thought of this our first appearance at home to our elegant neighbor. Why is fate always so unpropitious, and so maliciously fond of contretemps? Had we not all been seated in just the attitudes that a painter might have been delighted with for our portraits at least twenty times that day? And had I not given my rebellious hair various sly smoothings, when a thundering knock at the front door would cause my heart to throb more quickly in anticipation of Mr. Castleroy? And did it not now seem as though he had waited for the worst possible time to make his appearance?

A moment these thoughts troubled me as I bent in painful confusion—for no one but myself was as yet aware of his entrance—the next, I had proudly risen, strengthened by the consciousness that even if duty did sometimes lead one into ridiculous positions, it could not be wrong.

"I must beg forgiveness," said Mr. Castleroy, "for coming thus 'at the eleventh hour;' but I have come, even now, under the doubt that has agitated me all day whether my presence would be acceptable."

Susan had by this time straitened herself on

the sofa with a pair of eyes remarkably wide open—as is the custom with people when they are conscious of feeling sleepy—and we both smiled at this idea, as though it were too absurd to contradict. Grandmother received the visitor in her usual lady-like manner—nowise discomposed by her invalid wrapper—and soon I forgot all but Mr. Castleroy.

I can see that even grandmother is fascinated by his manner; but with her usual prudence she feels desirous to know who and what he is. New Year's Day is ended—and so is my New Year's Journal, for the clock has just struck twelve.

February 5th.—It is a beautiful, moonlight night of our unusually mild winter, and I have stood at my window looking out upon the moonbeams, and, like one of the Fates, weaving a thread of destiny. Beautiful, cold moonbeams! fall upon my burning brow, and cool the hot pulse that is throbbing so wildly.

I have glided up stairs while Susan was playing for Mr. Castleroy, and I feel that my presence will not be missed. Heaven grant, dear sister! that your path may be as bright as I would make it. You are far more worthy than I; and, perchance, even had I won the heart to which I would have aspired, I might have lived to see it turn from me in cold disdain.

My thoughts must have borrowed the seven-league boots and traversed the step from the sublime to the ridiculous; else why do I think of those expressive lines?

"They say thou wilt marry—'tis well, 'tis well!
Though the chain may be heavy, thou'rt under love's spell;
But I—I am free, and no Cupid shall task me,
I never will marry—till somebody ask me!"

But no, that is not at all applicable; henceforth, I shall devote myself to the good of the world—I will be a second "Madoline"—a banner to scenes of distress.

I had just written the above when Susan looked over my shoulder, and said that Mr. Castleroy wished to speak to me. What can he possibly want? To solicit my interposition between him and grandmother, perhaps, for Susan looks somewhat excited. I will go down.

Later.—The moonbeams are shining still, but their light is no longer cold—they came peering in at the parlor window, and teased me when I would willingly have had no light save that within.

"I have loved you, dear Katy, from our first meeting," said he, "but I did not know it until New Year's night, when I saw by the strong fire-light that your face was glowing with natural embarrassment, and then, throwing this off as

unworthy of you, you came to meet me with the air of a duchess—I then felt that you would brave all for duty, or those you loved."

But his words, pleasant as they are, fill me with a strange apprehension; is there, then, so much to be braved, and was grandmother correct in her suspicion that all was not quite right? I have as yet said nothing—I have referred him to her; and, with a mirthful gleam in his dark eyes, he placed a paper in my hands which I dread to open. Perhaps it is the key to some horrid mystery.

Mr. Castleroy's confession.

"You must rely upon my goodness now, sweet Katy, for wickedness in early years is said to be a good passport to perfection in manhood—and, as near as I can recollect, I was a particularly bad little boy. My poor father, on his death-bed, said to my mother, 'I am not afraid of the rest, but you will have trouble with that boy.' And trouble enough she did have with me. She has often since told me that she was afraid I would turn out a villain of the deepest dye. Even in childhood I was more like a little Robinson Crusoe than a civilized being; betaking myself to books and solitude whenever an opportunity offered.

"We were poor—a struggling with poverty is among my earliest recollections; and in my youth I imbibed a bitterness toward the world in general, which, although not an amiable result, was, perhaps, a natural one—for people are not disposed to tolerate pride that lacks wealth to support it, and the rude jostling which I received from my fellow pilgrims was not calculated to make me very leniently disposed toward them.

"I passed a youth of toil; and when verging on middle age, a wealthy uncle died and left me his property—for no reason that I could conceive, except that I was a prototype of himself with respect to my feelings toward my fellow mortals. I do not remember that a single word of love ever passed between us, and few words of any description; but he saw fit to make me his heir, and it was with a feeling of triumph that I took possession of my estate.

"I was now alone in the world; my mother had long been dead—my brothers, like 'the graves of a household,' were 'scattered far and wide;' and I took a pleasure in withdrawing myself from the 'nods and becks and wreathed smiles' which now encompassed me on every side to a lonely country place, where I imagined that I should be safe from comment or intrusion. I expended both time and money on the adornment of my summer castle; and here I intended to live and die, a sort of modern hermit—but alas! I fell a

victim to the very first trespasser on my grounds. Like the unfortunate young man in the Arabian Nights, whose father took so much pains to construct him a subterranean dwelling, where he could conceal himself from the dangerous Prince Agil, I have but rushed into my fate."

Nothing so very mysterious, after all! I wonder if I am not a little disappointed? But, Susan? How will she receive my confession?

Grandmother has said "yes" with tears in her

eyes; but she gazes toward the Castleroy mansion, through the leafless trees, and smiles to think that it is no farther off. Susan has promised herself to Paul Biggles, and in spite of my entreaties, goes resolutely to work to make a sacrifice of herself. I cannot help thinking of "Auld Robin Gray;" but grandmother tells me that I am mistaken in Paul, and that he has really behaved very nobly. What in, I am sure I don't know—but here is another mystery.

MAY AMONG THE MOUNTAINS.

BY CHARLES J. PETERSON.

THE mountains are before and around me. From the window of my hotel, I am told, there may be seen as magnificent a panorama as the Alleghanies afford: but the rain of the afternoon has produced a mist at this twilight hour; and a boundless ocean, as it were, now buries the landscape, except where, here and there, some black peak rises far away like an enchanted island. A few stars are already out dimly lighting up the scene. Oh! the everlasting beauty of the stars, the majesty of these eternal mountains. Under the influence of the two, I am lifted above the things of earth, as I never was before: time expands before me: eternity opens its endless vista; and I feel that though worlds may crumble, as that evening mist will fade, I shall survive like the stars and mountains, and *never* die.

For ten days I have been among the mountains. May, beautiful May, the virgin of the year, has accompanied my footsteps all the way, showering blossoms before my path, and smiling on me from the blue, over-arching sky. She has surrounded me with the songs of birds, the murmur of fountains, and the low laughter of leaves as the winds romped with them. The fragrance of her breath has been around me like a breeze from the land of spices and palms. All day long her bright tresses have waved before me in golden sunshine, as she skimmed, Atlanta-like, over the bright hills: and at night, she has tapped at my window, in merry dashes of rain, gleefully, half child that she is. Come with me to the mountains, with May as our companion, and forgetting Mammon for awhile, yield yourself up to the witchery of her presence, and become intoxicated with the poetry of her beauty, as once when young you were with your first love.

Let me recall a morning, after a storm the night before! We are driving along the margin of a broad, calm river, which moves gracefully and slowly on, as if conscious of the lovely hills around, and loth to part with them. The blue sky is flecked with clouds, that soften the light without entirely hiding the sun; the lilacs dissolve the air into perfume; and the apple blossoms shower on us, all the way, like flakes of rosy snow. Green fields on our right stretch luxuriantly to the horizon. On our left is the

placid river, with hills sloping, lawn-like, to the water, and often cultivated to their summits: now they run parallel to the stream; and now they branch laterally off, presenting a succession of Arcadian valleys, dotted with farm houses, and waving with the young wheat. The foreground of this magical landscape is green as the greenest meadow; further on the brown ploughed fields diversify the prospect; and in the remoter distance dark shadows alternate with vivid sunshine, as the fleecy clouds float in the azure above. A purple haze, like incense, softens the extreme prospect; while all the time, glimpses of woodland, and far-flashing waters relieve and dazzle the eye. Some such day, though, perhaps, a more sunny, and less lovely scene, inspired Lowell with his exquisite lines: you know them surely!

"Then think I of deep shadows on the grass—
Of meadows where in sun the cattle graze,
Where, as the breezes pass,
The gleaming rushes lean a thousand ways;—
Of leaves that slumber in a cloudy mass,
Or whiten in the wind,—of waters blue
That from the distance sparkle through
Some woodland gap—and of a sky above
Where one white cloud like a stray lamb doth move."

At last we bid farewell to the river, and strike boldly into the hills. Soon the road begins to rise. Within an hour we find ourselves in the heart of the mountains. But they are not wild like those we passed yesterday; for rich vallies open, on either hand, with names as beautiful as themselves, White Deer valley being one; and grand old woods, as unlike as possible to your rugged pine forests, fling their thick shade across the road-side. At last, having surmounted a long ascent, the driver tells us to look behind. What a scene! Far below is a vast plain, at least twenty miles across, bounded in the distance by a wall of dark blue mountains, checkered all over with alternate farms and woodland, threaded by the river like a glittering chain of steel, and the whole made alive, as a breathing thing, with the ever shifting sunshine and shade. Again and again, after we have resumed our way, we turn, wherever a break in the forest permits, to gaze on this magnificent view. Still ascending, we wind up and up, and now finally have gained the summit of the mountain. Yonder,

too, flies a bald eagle, from whom the range takes its name. It is a fit home for the tempest-defying bird. Here he can reign undisturbed in savage majesty. The pine-covered ridge rises sharply on our left; the descent is almost perpendicular on our right; and everywhere, wherever there is the slightest hold, huge rocks lie tossed about, in wild confusion, as if Titans had once warred here.

But now we have crossed the highest point, and begun to descend, rattling furiously down a road, terraced along precipices. Perilous as this rapidity is, we do not check our driver, for our blood dances with excitement amid this grand scenery and this exhilarating air, and we fear nothing. Suddenly, at a turn, another lovely landscape flashes upon us: it is one of verdant farms, snowy dwellings, and a blue river placidly flowing in the foreground: and we exclaim aloud in surprised delight. Another whirl around a corner, and lo! in the distance, far over the plain, the picturesque town of which we have so often heard, nestled there among its green verdure like a white swan in the rushes by a river side. Down the mountains we fly, still down, and yet down. At last we reach the level ground, but our horses, now excited as ourselves, still stretch on with rapid feet, and away we spin, under an avenue of feathery trees, by the very brink of the island-studded stream. The sun has almost set, and his level beams, struggling between the trunks, shoot across the road, which they tessellate with light and shadow, in a mosaic of gold and jet. Is not a day like this worth months in a city?

Another morning finds us high up in the Alleghanies, traversing a wild turnpike where we meet only a few wagoners, at long intervals, each with his solitary dog and his four Conestoga horses. The day is raw and showery. We have not gone far when we lose the spindle from the off fore-wheel, and stop at a solitary blacksmith's shop, in order to procure another. We have not been in such a place since we were a boy, when it was our delight to blow the bellows as an amateur. Our negro driver stands in the doorway looking on, with a sad, hopeless expression, as if the living type of all the wrongs of his race. In strong contrast to him is the Anglo-Saxon smith, quick of speech, intelligent, a rapid workman, welding his iron, and asking questions in the same breath; curious of all things going on in the great city we have left, but especially of a new lightning rod of which he has heard. The wheel is soon fixed, and again we are in motion. But our Ethiopian proves as slow as he is sad: to confess the truth

he is incorrigibly lazy. In four hours we achieve but fourteen miles. The cold, damp, penetrating air chills us to the heart. Only the superb scenery reconciles us to this slow progress on such a day. At last we gain the top of a mountain, and lo! what a landscape spreads below. A valley level as a table, five miles wide, and twenty long, stretches beneath us, every acre under cultivation, and divided so regularly into fields that it seems a vast chess-board, with alternate squares of green wheat and brown ploughed land. The sun brightens the foreground. But at the other side of the valley, a shower is passing, so that a purple black veil hangs over the plain in that direction, and lies half way up the slope of the opposite mountain. Soon, however, this curtain lifts, the distant ridges become distinct, and the whole magnificent panorama glows in green and gold.

Another time we have a Yankee charioteer, and away we go, down the mountain slope, like a mail coach with the news of a victory. In twenty minutes we are at the foot, a distance of four miles: in ten minutes more we have made it six. We enter a defile, that winds for miles between almost precipitous hills, only broad enough for the road we traverse, and for a narrow, rocky stream that runs beside it. The scenery is ever changing, yet always grand. Now the mountain ridges run together, are broken up, and rise in separate peaks like enormous pyramids. Now the defile opens laterally for a space, and through the gaps we catch glimpses of rolling hills, undulating away, till the black battlements of the distant Alleghanies close the prospect. Now the road seems to terminate just ahead, but suddenly a turn is seen, and as we whirl around the corner, our path opens again, the opposite precipice wheeling grandly away before us. All this time the stream goes plunging along its rocky bed, here glittering in the sunshine, there eddying black under the overhanging hills. At last we dash into the village, where we are to dine, having come fifteen miles in an hour and a half.

It is evening, in a lonely inn, high up in the mountains. We are, in fact, on the very verge of civilization. Away out in Iowa, or even Minnesota there is, they tell me, no ruder population than here: and could you hear the loud oaths in the bar-room, and see the revellers, you would think so too. But even here a lesson of faith and patience and human charity may be learned. Yonder, in one corner of the hall, is a white-haired man, with a few books, which he is peddling, displayed on a board before him. There was a time when that old man had almost count-

less health, was courted by flatterers, enjoyed the society of a wife and daughters that he loved. But fortune went against him, and death entered his family. He is now alone; penniless, friendless, desolate; with no one, as Burke touchingly says, to meet his enemy in the gate. But he is cheerful notwithstanding all. He sits quietly, unless some person picks up a book, when he begins to recommend it earnestly, but with dignity. He says he thanks God his heart is not yet broken. In the morning he is up with the earliest, for when we leave at daybreak, he is there to supply us with a book if we chance to require one. We do want one, and, as we give our piece of silver, wish that it could buy us a little of his patient faith.

It is late in the afternoon, and a storm is coming up: a sublime spectacle among these everlasting hills. How pitchy dark it has suddenly become. Hark! with the rush of a torrent, the rain is upon us. Soon the road is converted into a roaring river, through which the half frightened horses plash, snorting wildly as the lightning, flashing directly before them, reveals the awful precipice to the right, down which the water pitches in a foaming cataract, that is blown into spray long before it reaches the bottom. How the thunder bellows among the mountains all around us. See, yonder tree has been struck, and, on the instant, is splintered to the roots. Simultaneously the bolt cracks overhead, and then rattles down the sky, as if armies, with artillery jolting, and ten thousand sabres clattering, were at full gallop along the adamantine pavements of heaven. Now the electric clouds envelope us. The lightnings blaze incessantly, above, beneath, on every hand: we are in their very centre; our faces shine ghastly; the blue flame seems to exude from our fingers. Clap follows clap, stunningly, till the solid road rocks, and the mountain appears crumbling from under us. Never before have we realized Byron's vivid lines,

"Far along,
From peak to peak, the rattling crags among
Leaps the live thunder! Not from one lone cloud,
But every mountain now hath found a tongue,
And Jura answers through her misty shroud,
Back to the joyous Alps, who call to her aloud."

But now the storm passes, or rather descends below us, for though the sun shines here, we can see it raining heavily in the valley. Behold! His slanting beams, shooting almost horizontally across the plain, convert every one of those drops into seeming diamonds, that flash downward a moment and are lost to sight forever. But others as brilliant take their places; and the fleeting, dazzling show continues. Finally the

shower passes away into the distance, until we see it, like a black funeral procession, creeping along the foot of yonder range on the extreme horizon. Where we are all is now bright with vivid sunshine. Every twig glitters, the grass sparkles, the hill-torrents shoot by in silver, and the valley below glows like a transparent sea that flows over buried cities of gold.

The mountain region of Pennsylvania traverses the state in a direction slightly east of north, and is about a hundred miles broad. It is not a succession of peaks, like the Catskill, but a series of parallel ranges, of which the Alleghanies proper compose, as it were, the back-bone. Lateral ridges branch off continually. Between these, as well as between the chief ranges, lie innumerable vallies, the soil of which is the debris of the hills washed down by the torrents of centuries. Consequently, amid the wildest scenery, landscapes of almost Arcadian loveliness are almost ever recurring. The effects of light and shade vary the prospect still more. The cloud shadows traversing the distant slopes; the thin blue haze rising from streams that lie hid in the laps of the hills; the emerald green of the grass at your feet; and the purple vapor on the horizon, like Burgandy of the richest vintage, render the mountains of Pennsylvania beautiful and picturesque beyond description. But when to this loveliness is added the beetling precipices, fir-covered heights, sounding waterfalls, shining torrents, and majestic sweep of the greater ranges, every other sensation is lost in the sublime. I repeat, a dozen times a day, with involuntary rapture, Howitt's exclamation:—"Thank God for mountains." But to behold the mountains aright, you must bid farewell to railroads, eschew canals, and, if possible, avoid even stage-coaches. Take a private conveyance, or go on foot, and choose the rude old turnpikes, for they nearly always cross the hills in the most picturesque directions. The Indians, whose paths were generally followed in laying out these primitive highways, must have had a keen eye for Nature. I never stand on the brow of a mountain, and see how skilfully they brought their route to the finest possible point for a view, but I feel that they also, untutored though they were, must have exclaimed, "Thank God for mountains."

To see the sun rise from the top of a mountain is glorious; but it is scarcely finer than to descend a mountain at twilight. We have to do it now. The town, where we are to sleep, lies in a valley, by the river side, and long before we reach the acclivity that overhangs it, night descends. Before us, we see nothing but a black

abyss, a universal sea of darkness, and we check the horses involuntarily, for an instant, as if another step would plunge us headlong into that bottomless gulf. Yet lo! directly in front, high in the clear azure, the evening star; and it seems to beckon us forward. We take courage, and advance, for it beams there peacefully, and full of hope, like the cross shining, Pharos-like, above the Valley of the Shadow of Death.

Death, ever insatiable death! As I look from my window to-night, watching the mist whelming the landscape, I think of what death has buried from my sight, even as the fog has swallowed up the valley. I recall the drear November day, when I laid thee in thy grave, my only daughter. Oh! first born of my heart, shall I never behold again that pale, patient little face? Never listen, at night, to thy feet pattering overhead? Never be woke, at morning, by thy kiss? Never see thee come running to the door to be the first to welcome me? Never, in old age, be blessed with thy smiles? Farewell, farewell forever to the sweet caresses of those loving arms; to the dear prattle so full of affection; to the thousand winning ways which endeared thee to all, but most, and how immeasurably, to thy mother and me. Yet, short as was thy life, it sufficed to finish thy work. Thy mission it was to reveal to me the great mystery of death. For thou wast an angel in disguise, sent into our household to bind our hearts to thee, so that, when heaven demanded

thee again, we might wish to be there also. To-night, blessed be God, I feel that thou art nearest of the three I best love. From wife and boy hundreds of miles separate me; but thy presence, though unseen, is on me like a spell. Thy death has taught me that the barriers which divide the visible from the invisible world are thin as a vapor, and that the loved and lost are often nearest to us, when they seem furthest removed. Even in that terrible hour, when, amid gusts of driving rain, I heard the clods fall on thy coffin, wisdom was given me to experience this great truth, so that I could echo thy mother's sobbing exclamation, as she looked into the narrow grave and cried, "thank God, she is not there." No, thank God, the tomb holds but thy mortal part; thy immortal essence has gone home. Yes! home, home. Now know I the mystery of death. There is no home but heaven, and the tomb is its portal. Therefore:—"Oh! grave, *where* is thy sting? Oh! death, *where* is thy victory."

In the presence of the mountains, the symbols of Eternity, all mean and narrow thoughts disappear, and the soul speaks its true language, free from the dross of conventionalism. I am a better man, I know, for having been among the mountains. They are a part of the everlasting verity, whom no man can stand face to face with, yet doubt the greater verity, the Creator of all.

Go to the mountains, therefore, if you would feel that you are immortal!

"ALL IS NOT GOLD THAT GLITTERS."

BY JANE WEAVER.

"WHAT a superb woman Mrs. Mayhew is," said a young student from the country, to one of his city friends. "Really she has quite an English complexion. How a lady, at her age, can be so blooming, is really wonderful."

His companion smiled, and replied,

"You don't understand city life yet, I see, Harry. The bloom you behold on the cheeks of our ladies is not all natural——"

"What! Not natural! You don't mean to say that they paint."

"I mean to say exactly that; nothing more, nothing less."

"And is Mrs. Mayhew one of the number?"

His companion nodded, laughing, as he did so, at the other's consternation.

"Well, I will say this for her," said Harry, after he had recovered something of his composure, "she paints very well. I confess myself completely deceived. In fact, she beats Nature herself, she is so natural."

"Ladies are not always so skilful," replied his friend, "nor does Mrs. Mayhew herself hit the mark, in painting, on every occasion. In truth, the old adage about meddling with sharp tools holds good of others as well as of little boys. If you'll take another cigar, and listen as you would to a professor, I'll tell you a tale that has the merit of truth at any rate."

"I'm all attention."

"Well, you must know, one of our *ton*, last winter, gave a ball that was the talk of the fashionable circles, for months before and after; and to this ball Mrs. Mayhew was invited of course. There are hundreds like you, Harry, who think the lady in question a second Juno; and, I must confess, that at a distance, and to the uninitiated, she really does look beautiful. Her large eyes still retain their dreamy languor: and her figure is too good to require a milliner to make up deficiencies. Slander, however, whispers that her locks are not all her own, that dentistry has had more to do with her teeth than Nature, and that the pearly appearance of her skin is to be attributed to cosmetics and not to a real complexion. Be this as it may, Miss Mayhew, at a ball, or the opera, seems a splendid creature, and manages, though a grandmother, to pass for a fashionable beauty still. Of course,

at the ball in question, she was anxious to appear as superb as ever. Her dress was a master-piece, and was exhibited privately at the milliner's, before it was sent home; her diamonds were reset; and her footman bought up all the richest flowers, at the green-houses, for her especial use.

"The eventful evening, as the story-tellers say, came at last. I was one of those invited, and went early, for I was curious to see the entire show. Mrs. Mayhew, like many other fashionables, has a trick of going late to a party; I suppose because she wishes to have a crowd to see her enter. On this night she came later than usual. Nearly five hundred persons had collected, crowding the rooms almost to suffocation: and the dancing was proceeding with the greatest spirit, when, at last, she appeared. I was not in a situation to observe her at first, being wedged into one corner, with a score of feathered and flowered heads interposing between me and her, but I observed that as she slowly passed up the rooms, in order to pay her respects to the hostess, an audible titter followed where I presumed she had gone. Now and then I caught a glimpse of the plumes in her hair, and once had a momentary vision of one shoulder of her magnificent lace cape. Finally she passed out of sight, and in the tumult of the dance I had forgotten all about her, when suddenly I saw her, right before me, escorted by one gentleman, and talking volubly to another in her most fascinating manner."

"Well," cried Harry, with eager curiosity, for his friend paused here to relight a cigar.

"It required all my politeness," resumed the narrator, with a sly smile at the listener's interest, "to keep from laughing outright at the appearance she presented. Have you ever seen an Indian in his war-paint, especially one of those rare old fellows, who seem to think alternate streaks of red and yellow are the perfection of taste? If you have you can form some conception how your beauty looked. I understood the cause of all at a glance. She had dressed by a dim light—I afterward heard that the gasepipes were being altered in her house, and that she had performed her toilet by candle-light—and the result was that the painting which, at home, had looked perfect, would not stand a

scrutiny under the blaze of gas. Her cheeks, in fact, were in streaks. You can imagine nothing more hideous, Harry. Here a bit of parchment colored skin; there a line of rouge; here a dot of yellow; there a daub of red. The cream of the joke was that she was utterly unconscious of all this, and smiled, and smirked, and puckered up her withered skin, believing herself, like any coquette of sixteen, perfectly irresistible. How the moustached monkey, to whom she was talking, preserved his gravity, I cannot tell: it was a puzzle to me then, and has been ever since; and the only solution I can offer is that, perhaps, his whiskers were dyed or he wore a wig."

Harry was laughing outrageously. But his friend gravely proceeded, though there was a mischievous twinkle in his eye.

"Mrs. Mayhew, after that memorable evening, went travelling for the winter; for the laugh was too great against her, even for a woman of fashion to endure. But, this year, she has reappeared again, and is destined, I suppose, to pass for as great a beauty as before, at least to the uninitiated."

He paused, and added,

"So you see, Harry, that in fashionable life, as in jeweler's shops, ALL IS NOT GOLD THAT GLITTERS."

THE PIC-NIC.

BY REV. H. HASTINGS WELD.

"Now, Carry, I must insist that you promise us!"

"I never make any promise stronger than a conditional one, Alice. If nothing occurs——"

"If nothing occurs!" cried Alice, laughing—"why do you imagine that three mortal weeks can go over and nothing occur in them? Is the world to stand still for our convenience? But you are always so full of your *ifs* and *buts* and conditions!"

Both the young ladies who thus chatted were beautiful. There was a family likeness between them—more than an ordinary family likeness, for they were the daughters of twin sisters. And both were orphans too—thus early introduced to the chances and changes of this fleeting world. Both were wards of their only uncle—their only relative indeed, for their uncle had no children. He lived for his nieces, and seemed to have transferred to them the affection which he had felt in his early youth for their parents. And to the two children had descended the characters of their mothers. Alice was mirthful and sad by turns, but always disposed to trifle—never to think. She was giddy for no apparent reason—said she knew not why. Caroline, her elder by a few years, was uniformly cheerful, but sedate and thoughtful. If she had never the light spirits of her volatile cousin, neither did she descend to her gloomy depths. Alice would take your admiration by storm, and force you to admire her as a butterfly, or other beautiful trifle. Caroline won your esteem and respect, and secured your love, by the sure foundation of loveable qualities.

Alice and her young friends had arranged a pic-nic, and secured not only the permission, but the presence and counsel of Uncle William. And it was appointed for three weeks from the date of its conception, in order that they might have the presence of some friends who were at that time expected. Alice endeavored in vain to induce Caroline positively to pledge herself, and was compelled at last to be content with "*ifs* and *buts* and conditions." It was more than a habit—it was a point of principle with Caroline Brandt never to make a positive arrangement of her time. She always mentally reserved against contingencies. The loss of father and mother

and other dear friends had impressed her youthful mind with a deep feeling of the uncertainty of life, and her strong religious feeling made her habitually regard all that befel as ordered by a kind and good Father, who never willingly afflicts or grieves. To His direction she uniformly referred all that happened; and if she did not continually mention this as her reason for her "*ifs* and *buts*," it was because of the reverential feelings which were partly her nature, and in part the result of education.

The beautiful and thoughtless Alice suffered no such considerations to come between her and her purposes. And if duty or propriety compelled her to forego her cherished schemes, we must acknowledge that it was with no very good grace that she relinquished her designs. She was often forced to acknowledge that Caroline's was much the wiser course—but with the perverseness of a spoiled beauty, she did not permit experience, or the example of her more thoughtful cousin to change her conduct.

The time drew round. The preparations were complete. The promised guests arrived, and the morning of the day had come. "Now," said Alice, as she laid her hand upon her cousin's shoulder, and waked her from her sleep, "tell me, has *anything* occurred? Had you pleasant dreams, and no ill omens to bid you beware of this day's amusement? Say, most prophetic cousin——"

But even Alice's giddiness was checked. There was such an expression of pain and doubt and anxiety on Caroline's face, that Alice ceased to speak, and gazed in wonder. Caroline drew her hands across her brow, and said, "thank you, dear, dear Alice, for waking me. I was in *such* distress! But I am not so weak as to be moved by a dream to change my purposes. I am aware of no reason now to deny myself the pleasant excursion you have planned. But we know not what a day may bring forth."

The two cousins made their morning toilet. Caroline—methodical Caroline, was as usual dressed and down before her careless cousin. As she threw open the window, a boy ran up—"I've been waiting since day-light. Nobody has seen me. Here!" He placed a note in her hand. Before she could question him, he was gone. She

knew the messenger, and had sad forebodings as to the nature of his message. With palpitating heart she read—and thrust the note in her bosom as Alice entered.

"Why, Carry, dear, are you ill?" Alice anxiously inquired.

"No, cousin—that is yes—but it will soon be over. Don't question me."

"Don't question you! Why, Caroline! what a strange fancy is this? Uncle will never suffer you to conceal a grief, or hide a pain in this way. What is the matter?"

"Alice!" said Caroline, in a low, earnest tone.

The girl thus impressively appealed to, was all attention.

"Do you wish me to go with you to-day?"

"Why, yes, cousin, if you are well enough—but you fright me terribly!"

"I *am* well. And I will go with you upon two conditions. One is that you say nothing of this to my uncle. And the other that you contrive, or at least cover my absence from the party for two or three hours to-day."

"I can promise the first—but why the second? How dare I? What *do* you mean? What is this mystery?"

"You must not ask. And if you will not promise me, I shall remain at home."

"I *will*, I will tell uncle all about it!" said Alice, bursting into tears, and throwing her arms round her cousin's neck. "It is strange—it is dreadful!"

"What is strange and dreadful?" asked Caroline, calmly.

"Why you waken in the morning in such a flutter! And then you terrify me so with your ashy paleness! And then you make such strange requests! I declare, Cousin Carry, I don't know what to think of you!"

"Well, Alice," said Caroline, forcing a smile, "I will wait till we have breakfasted, and see then what you decide upon."

Uncle William was in high spirits at breakfast, and rallied his two nieces upon thinking and dreaming so much upon their day's pleasure that they had worn themselves out before it commenced. Words flew to Alice's lips, but the calm look of her cousin checked her, and she blushed crimson and was silent. Caroline performed the entire duties of the breakfast table with composure, at which Alice was lost in wonder. And Uncle William, as he left to make some necessary preparations, puzzled himself little as to what could have overcast the countenances of the cousins. He had lived too long to expect a reason for all the phases of the sex, and asked no questions.

"If you will let me go with you, Caroline, we can slip away together——"

"Not a step, cousin, and what is more, you must not even look after me! Come, don't look so very much bewildered. Give me credit for some discretion. I am going to do nothing either foolish or wicked."

"I know, my wise cousin," said Alice, "that your prudence is a proverbial rebuke to my folly—and as to your doing anything wicked, that, I do believe is impossible. But confess, now, that this is a most strange proceeding!"

"Alice, if you had not surprised me this morning when somewhat disconcerted, I should have accompanied you, and effected my purpose without your aid, or suspicion. And to-morrow you would have seen the same Cousin Carry as ever—yes, indeed, and to-day too, only that you might have wondered a little why I played hide and seek with you."

Caroline at last obtained her cousin's reluctant promise; and not a moment too soon, for Uncle William was ready, and the carriage was at the door before his wards came down. And when they came he only thought they had spent their time to good purposes, for both looked more beautiful than ever. Alice was thoughtful—an unusual thing for her, but he fancied that it was anxiety about the fete, and laughingly assured her that nothing had been omitted or forgotten—and that all would go "merry as a marriage bell." Caroline was self-possessed and calm—her natural demeanor.

A pleasant gipsy party was that assembled in the little dell which had been chosen for the day's amusement. Modern inventions had not, at that day, spoiled the true pleasures of the pic-nic. Nobody presumed to wear any article of dress or ornament out of keeping in the woods. There was no hired band of musicians. There were no specimens of the skill of professed confectioners—no dining, ball-room, or drawing-room luxuries brought to the sylvan scene, to destroy the unities and mar the negligent pleasure of the day by any forced refinements or constraint. It was a pic-nic in earnest—a real pic-nic, a hearty, unsophisticated and innocent frolic. All enjoyed themselves. And nobody at first missed Caroline, who, true to her purpose, disappeared. Even Alice did not know, until Caroline had been some time absent, that her cousin had carried out her intention.

The expected guests were there. With one of them only, Egbert Moore, has our narrative any thing to do. He was the admired of the one sex, and the envy of the other. For many years he had been absent from his native village, returning

only, for brief visits, or such occasions as the present, to delight his former playmates with such glimpses of the world as were shadowed and represented in his brilliant wit and courtly manners. He had been especially attracted to Caroline, and much admired her individuality; for she had a character of her own, and was above imitation and superior to the awkwardness of seeming to be continually striving to be "like other people."

"Where is Miss Brandt?" he asked, at length, when all his own searching had failed to discover her retreat. Alice, who had been expecting and fearing that some one would make this inquiry, feigned not to hear it, but the young man had caught a glimpse of her, and followed up his question. "Come, Miss Alice, tell us where your cousin has flown! You look as forlorn as a bird without its mate in her absence; and it is only charity to search her out to relieve your loneliness!"

"Nonsense!" said Alice, laughing, and yet confused. "Cousin Carry knows every root of the underbrush here, and every tree is familiar to her. If all the ladies present will not suffice to make up her absence to you, sit down like a lone knight, and con a woeful ditty! Suppose you engrave her name on the bark of a few trees! I'll answer for her return before you have half cut through the woods!"

There was more than a shade of vexation in this answer, and in the tone of the fair speaker's voice. Egbert was silenced—for he saw that for some reason or other it was not a subject to be pressed.

But where was Caroline? When she left the party she tripped aside from the beaten path, and in a few moments reached a lonely lane which was effectually screened from the scene of the revels, though still within hearing of the voices of the happy party. This she followed until she arrived at a solitary house, where her presence was evidently not unexpected; for at the open door before she reached it, appeared the lad who had seen her in the morning. Immediately following him came a woman, bowed more with the weight of sorrow than of years.

"You have come to a sad house! Miss Brandt," said the cottager.

"It is better to go to the house of mourning than to the house of feasting," said Miss Brandt.

"But when the mourning is the effect of wickedness and folly! That ever daughter of mine could thus afflict me!" And as she said this, the woman dashed away a tear almost spitefully, as if she would nerve herself against weakness, and deny herself the kind relief of tears.

"Sit down," said Caroline. "Sit down and give way to your grief. Sit here while I go to your daughter. When did she come home?"

"Lord have mercy upon me! Lord have mercy upon me! Oh, Miss Caroline, Miss Caroline! It's five years, come Christmas since she left me"—and here the woman with her elbows on her knees, and her face hidden in her hands rocked her head feverishly to and fro, and choked for words. "I heard often from her, for she always was writing. And she still sent me money from time to time, and latterly it came so often that my heart began to misgive me. It's all here—all that came lately, I mean—it's the price of her soul—I never can touch it again—never!"

"Mother!" cried a voice from an inner room. The woman hastened to answer the summons, and in a few moments returned and beckoned to Caroline, who followed her. There, upon the plain but decent bed lay the poor penitent, wan and wasted. She had come home stricken—to die. "This is so kind of you!" she said to Caroline. She did not so much as lift her hand, and as Caroline took it from the pillow, she half shrank, as if not worthy to be touched by the pure. Caroline stooped and kissed her pale forehead. She shrieked with grief, and turning away her head buried her face in the pillow, and sobbed till the bed shook. "Leave me a little while," she said, and Caroline went out again into the air.

It was a calm autumn day. The mellow tints of the landscape—the quiet stillness of the spot, disturbed only by the drowsy hum of the insects, and the noise of a little brook that babbled by—all spake peace and innocence. But oh, what a tempest of guilt was rending that poor heart, and how at war with God's peace were the stormy passions of reluctant repentance and angry hate. But at the hate, who can wonder?

While, during the evening before, the poor woman who had lived in that house maiden and wife, mother and widow all her days, was reading the chapter of Holy Writ with which she always closed her day, she felt a breath on her cheek, and heard a sigh. She turned instantly in her terror—and there stood, like a guilty spectre, the pale girl who had come home to die. We will not attempt to describe that meeting. The sorrow-stricken mother could not—though she tore open her heart afresh in the attempt.

Caroline was soon called back. She asked to know nothing. She saw that the poor child, who had been once her protegee had sinned—she knew she suffered. She knelt down at her bedside and poured out words of prayer for the penitent—words which seemed to bring their answer, with their utterance. The sufferer grew calm as Caro-

line proceeded; and when she ceased, feebly but heartily responded amen! The missionary of mercy paused a few moments upon her knees in silent communion with the Hearer of Prayer. When she arose she was neither surprised nor offended to find the penitent asleep. Caroline walked quietly from the room, and as she left the house, the mother overwhelmed her with thanks and blessings. She also placed in her hands a small packet, which, she said, her daughter had charged her to give Miss Brandt, if she died without seeing her.

What a world of contrast is this we live in! In a short half hour Caroline was again among her happy young companions. She knew too well what she owed to her friends to let the sad scene she had witnessed—since she could not describe it to them—alter her deportment. And as she was never excitable or volatile, none but Alice could detect that aught save happiness had crossed her path that day. But with her knowledge of the mystery of the morning, Alice did not fail to perceive that something very unusual had taken place with her fair cousin.

The day passed as all such days go over. There was the usual endurance of fatigue—the usual disappointment with many—and on the whole for laborious pleasure Cousin Alice's picnic would compare very well with other such occasions. The city guests, and Egbert Moore in especial, gave rise to a world of gossip and remark. All agreed that Egbert was very much attracted by Caroline. And all for once were right, although she was innocent of any intention to challenge his notice.

On the next day, Egbert called, as a matter of form upon the cousins. Alice was all vivacity—Caroline refused herself to him. Closely did Alice press her cousin for the reason of such waywardness. "If it was me, now, Cousin Carry, nobody would wonder; but that you, who are the model of propriety, should play the coquette is a wonder!"

Caroline drew her cousin's head to her breast, and Alice nestled there like a child. "Now, Cousin Prudence," said Alice, "you need not go to warning me against that charming young man. It is you who have captivated him, and you need not fear that I shall accept your rejected one—even if you do choose to reject him. I certainly will not supplant you!"

"Peace, trifter!" said Caroline, stopping Alice with a kiss. "You talk of you know not what!" And as she said this she rose, and took up her hat and shawl.

"Me too!" cried Alice, jumping up.

"No—cousin!" said Caroline, decidedly.

"I declare you are too bad—and I *will* tell uncle all about your strange movements!"

Caroline passed out without heeding her. She went again alone to the cottage. The wearied spirit of the poor wanderer had winged its flight from earth. Caroline spake a word of comfort to the mother, and returned home sad, but with the consciousness of a duty performed, since she had visited the sick in her affliction, and comforted the mourner. On the next day she took Alice with her to the church-yard, and as the sexton placed the turf upon a nameless grave, Caroline drew near and whispered hope to the mourning mother—who except the lad before mentioned was the only mourner. The clergyman bowed and drew back respectfully—for he knew the quiet and unobtrusive mode in which Caroline ministered to the poor and unhappy.

As they walked home Caroline told Alice all that she so much desired to know. The decent pride of the mother, and the shrinking shame of the dying had pleaded that their sorrow should not be made public. And thus the guilt-stricken who had returned to die among her kindred, "stole from the world."

Spring had come, with its early flowers and budding hopes. Again the country was cheerful. Nothing had happened to disturb the monotony of a country winter to the cousins—save that the poor old woman in whom Alice had become as much interested as Caroline, was placed beside her daughter.

"Now, Cousin Carry, you must go down," said Alice, tripping into her chamber. "Egbert is here—your city friend, you know—and he insists on seeing you. I am as nothing in his eyes."

Caroline hesitated. Alice wondered to see her face grow pale—then calmly stern. She walked to a drawer, and taking thence a parcel, said, "come, Alice." And Alice wonderingly obeyed. As they entered the parlor, Egbert met them, all radiant with smiles—the ready compliment tripping on his tongue. But he was awed into silence by Caroline's manner—he was astonished into awkwardness, when without a word she placed the parcel in his hand. He hastily opened it—reddened—blanched again—and stammered—"Miss Brandt, I hope—I fear some one has traduced me—I—" He ventured to look up to see if there was a glance of encouragement in her face. She stood erect in cold, scornful composure, and he hastily took his hat and fled.

"Now I *would* like to know what Gorgon's head you had in that brown paper!" cried Alice, uncertain whether she should laugh, or cry, or scold.

"It was his own miniature.

"The villain!" exclaimed Alice, "now I understand it all! But why did you not tell me before?"

"There was no need, dear cousin, and I hoped there never would be. We must keep our own counsel still, for the sake of the poor victims of his wickedness who lie side by side in their unhonored graves."

"Carry!" said Alice, as they retired that night.

"Well, Cousin Alice."

"You know, Carry, you told me we are to have no more of these dreadful secrets, and I am to be very discreet, and you are to trust me with every thing. Now you must tell me what made you so very strange on the morning of the pic-nic, last summer, before you left your bed indeed. I must know all about it."

"Do you see that tree," said Caroline, drawing her cousin to the window. "Of course you do not remember that the night before our party, you were first in bed——"

"Indeed I might," said Alice, blushing, "for, graceless girl that I am, I am often asleep while you are still on your knees, and praying for me too, I am sure!"

Caroline smoothed back the loose curls from the fair brow of Alice, and continued, "the night

was as bright as this. I stood a few moments in the shadow of that curtain, and thought I saw a female figure under that tree, watching the house. I blew out the light and returned to the window, and was soon satisfied that I had been correct in my supposition; for slowly and wearily the figure moved away. I went to bed and dreamed of the sad, homeless wanderers there are in the world, while God gives us friends and food and shelter."

"Dear Cousin Carry!"

"Can you wonder that I waked disturbed—or that a note from her, begging me to come alone should so move me—or that I should wish to keep my darling Alice as long as possible from the knowledge of the evil that is in the world?"

"What *would* Uncle William say to all this?"

Caroline answered,

"He knew all, long ago, cousin; for he had a right to know. I would not make so light of his kindness as to take any important step without him. It was he indeed who suggested to me that mode of dismissing Mr. Moore from our acquaintance. But good night, Cousin Alice! Don't dream of moonlight figures—for such adventures happen only once in a life-time to any, and to the greater number, never."

DOING EVIL THAT GOOD MAY COME.

BY MISS ALICE GRAY.

"CLARA, I wish you would go to the nursery, and see if you can't keep Charley quiet. Your father won't let me leave him a moment, and that noise makes his head much worse."

"Yes, Clara, Clara," called an impatient voice from the sick room. "Go this minute, and do something—amuse it—put it to sleep—frighten it—something—just whenever I want to sleep, that child begins to scream. I verily believe it does it on purpose."

Clara Lathrop hurried to the side of her baby cousin, who was almost black in the face with screaming.

"What in the world is the matter with him?" she said to the nurse.

"Sure it's nothing but the temper. Its meself that's walked the floor with him the whole blessed night, and my feet were swelled enough agin mornin' came, and I darent stop a minute, for fear Mr. Lathrop would hear the child and be the death of me."

"Were you up all last night? Oh, then go and lie down now, for perhaps he'll cry all the time to-night. I'll take care of him this afternoon."

"Many thanks to you, Miss Clara," said the girl, as she left the room.

But Charley would not be amused, nor put to sleep, nor frightened into silence. He was as fretful and peevish as he could possibly be. After more than two hours ineffectual efforts, Clara, exhausted and out of patience, happened to cast her eyes toward the mantle-piece, where stood some vials of medicine.

"I wonder if there's any paregorio there," thought she. "I've a good mind to give him some, though aunt did forbid it so positively yesterday."

She walked to the mantle, and took up the bottle.

"There's none here," she said, despondingly. "What shall I do? I can't keep him still. Charley, Charley, for goodness sake, hush. There's laudanum though. A few drops of that wouldn't hurt him, I know."

Clara stood for some time with the bottle in her hand, and then set it down and walked away. It was not the idea that the thing was wrong that restrained her. Clara Lathrop's warm heart and generous temper were not guided by principle.

Deprived of her mother at an early age, and brought up at a boarding-school, she had imbibed very loose notions on the subject of morals. But she knew her aunt would be highly displeased if she gave laudanum or anything of the kind to Charley, and it was rather a daring act even for her. A fresh burst of screams now assailed her ears.

"Oh! father will certainly hear that." Her eye fell again on the vial of laudanum. "I can do nothing else," she murmured.

She poured a few drops into a cup of arrow-root, and held it to his lips. He drank it, and in a little while became more quiet, and at last fell asleep.

"I am sure sleep will do him good," thought she, as she sat by his crib in the darkening twilight.

The next afternoon her services were again called in requisition to quiet Charley, "as she had been so successful yesterday."

"Oh, then, Miss Clara," said Betsey, as she entered the room, "he was as bad as he could be yesterday; but to-day he's worse yet. I'm tired to death with him, but its not a bit tired he is. I'd not lave you alone with him, but Mrs. Stone wants me to go on an errand. I'll be back as soon as I can."

"At the end of an hour, Clara threw herself back in her chair almost in despair. Just then a servant opened the door with an impatient message from Mr. Lathrop, that he could stand it no longer—she *must* keep the child still.

"I'll give him some more laudanum," thought she. "It didn't hurt him yesterday afternoon, and it won't now."

She gave him the laudanum, but he seemed even more irritable.

"It must be that I didn't give him enough," she murmured. "Yet it was as much as I gave him before."

She poured out a few drops more, though her hand trembled and her heart beat rather quickly. In a few minutes Charley fell into a profound slumber, and when Betsey returned she said that Mr. Lathrop was much better, for he had got a good sleep since Charley became quiet.

About twelve o'clock the next day Clara was summoned to the nursery. Charley had never

waked since she left him the night before. About nine that morning, Betsey had endeavored without success to wake him, and in an hour or two she tried again; but all her efforts to rouse him from the heavy stupor in which he lay being ineffectual, she sent for his mother. When Clara entered the room, Mrs. Stone had Charley in her lap, and a physician was bending over him with an anxious face.

"Some opiate has been administered to the child, ma'am," said he.

"Betsey, have you given him anything?" said Mrs. Stone, almost distractedly.

"Oh, ma'am, its not meself would do the likes of that. Oh! no one has, ma'am. Sure its Miss Clara was with him all the time I was gone."

"Were you with him all the time, Clara? Didn't you leave him with any one for an instant?" said her father, who had risen from his sick bed and tottered to the room.

"No, sir," replied she, and the state of the poor child, whose hand she held, might well account for her pale cheeks and faltering voice.

"This is the sleep produced by opium in some form or other," said the doctor. "I fear he will never wake again."

"Oh! dear doctor, can't you think of any thing?" exclaimed Mrs. Stone.

He shook his head. "It is out of my power to rouse him."

"Let me try once more," said Betsey, and throwing wide open the window, she commenced tossing the little fellow up and down in the current of fresh air, repeating his name in the most endearing accents, while Clara looked on with a wildly beating heart. She wished to confess all, but dared not. Once, twice she opened her lips to speak, but fear checked the words. Oh, those were moments of agony to her! Hope had gone out in even the mother's heart, but Betsey still kept on, and at last signs of returning animation appeared. The tears poured fast from Clara's eyes. Her heart was almost crushed with a sense of gratitude to God that He had thus spared her, and earnestly did she press her white lips on her little cousin's hand.

"See, ma'am," said Betsey, "he's opening his eyes. He knows me now."

"Yes," said the doctor. "Strangely enough, you have succeeded, my good girl, where all my art failed. This strong draught of cool air, and more than all, the familiar voice, has recalled the vanishing spark of life."

Mrs. Stone clasped her recovered darling to her breast, while Clara, covering her face with her handkerchief, stole away to weep in secret.

The mystery about an opiate having been s-

ministered to Charley, was explained by the bottle of laudanum being found standing next to one containing hive syrup; and precisely like it in size and appearance. Mrs. Stone supposed she must have mistaken it for the syrup when she went to give some of the latter to Charley just before leaving him the day before. Clara's secret was buried in her own breast. What good would it do to tell it? she asked herself. This was her usual test. She would have been a noble girl had she been guided by any fixed principles either of habit, education, or conscience. But perhaps there never was a being more utterly afloat. Her feelings were warm and kind. She was constantly trying in every way to make people happy. But she had no stopping-place—with her the end sanctified the means.

She was an only child, and her two cousins, Richard and Charley, were to her as brothers. And how much more deeply did she love little Charley after his escape from the suffering and danger she had caused him. She felt that she could not do too much for him. For Richard, a wild, head-strong boy of fifteen, she always had enough to do. She shielded him from his uncle's and mother's just displeasure in many ways. She hid his faults, and explained away what could not be hid, and often bore the blame which should have been his. She would sit up at night to let him in, make excuses for his absence from the breakfast-table, lend him money, translate his Latin lessons—all to prevent her father angering him by severe reproof. Richard's temper was so easily roused, and so peculiar, that she knew anything of that kind would only make matters worse. Very often, to conceal or excuse his short-comings, she had to venture assertions not exactly "founded on fact," but there was nothing either in her education or habits of mind to cause her to shrink from that. One evening her usual evasions would not satisfy her father.

"Where is Richard?" he asked.

"I believe he is round at James Bronson's."

"In the streets, much more likely. I'll have no more of this."

Eleven o'clock came.

"Hasn't Richard come in yet?" said Mr. Lathrop.

"I—I think—it seems to me I heard him go up stairs a little while ago."

"What do you say, Clara? Why don't you turn around and speak plainly? Is Richard in or not?"

"I think very likely he is studying his lessons, sir—he had a very long Latin one to-night."

"Isn't that a Latin book I've seen you busy with this evening?"

Clara hastily shuffled away the copy of Caesar's Commentaries from which she had been translating, and taking up an Italian author, replied, "Latin? yes! at least I suppose they call Italian modern Latin"—at the same time reading the name of the book.

"I hope you never give Richard any improper help in his studies, Clara. I'll go up to his room and make sure whether he is in or not."

"Oh, no, father, I'll go—it's too far for you."

"I'm going up to bed, and it is only one pair of stairs further."

Clara followed. At the foot of the second flight he paused a moment.

"Let me run up, father," said Clara.

"Well! go then. If he's not there I'll sit up for him myself."

Clara ran up to her cousin's room. What should she do? If she let her father know of his absence, he would give him a severe scolding when he returned. That would make Richard angry, and he would give his uncle some disrespectful answer, which might provoke that gentleman to fulfil his oft-expressed threat of sending him to boarding-school. Richard away from home, alone amid scenes of temptation—under harsh guardians? Her resolution was taken, and she ran down to her father.

"If you could see Dick, father, you wouldn't need to ask a question. He looks the picture of comfort. I didn't disturb him to ask if he was in."

How fearfully loud to Clara sounded Richard's low rap that night! How the stairs creaked as she crept down—they never creaked before—and the bolt of the front-door seemed to have grown suddenly rusty.

"Softly, Dick, softly," she whispered, as she admitted him.

Richard took off his boots and stole up stairs. As they passed Mr. Lathrop's room, they heard a sudden movement inside. Clara just had time to draw her cousin within the open door of her own room, when her father, in flannel gown and night-cap, with candle in hand, opened his door.

"Who's there?" he called.

"I, sir," said Clara. "I heard a voice down stairs, and went to see what it was."

"I heard some noise too," said the worthy gentleman, coming forward, and glancing all around Clara's room. Richard had ensconced himself behind the bed. Mr. Lathrop turned back to his own room, the door of which he left open.

"Dick," whispered Clara, "can't you get up stairs now? I think father is going up to your room."

The boy stole out into the hall. Clara threw down a large rocking-chair, and under cover of the noise he gained his own chamber.

"What under the sun are you about, Clara," exclaimed Mr. Lathrop.

"This chair fell over, sir."

"You make noise enough to wake the whole house," replied her father, at the same time rapidly mounting the stairs to the third story. Richard just saved himself by jumping into bed with all his clothes on, as his uncle opened the door. Mr. Lathrop walked to the bed, and saw him apparently buried in sleep. "All's right," he muttered. "I don't know what it was that made me suspect what Clara said."

Clara breathed again when she heard Richard's door closed.

"Miss Clara," said the chambermaid to her, a few mornings after, "the dress-maker has sent again for her pay."

Clara was puzzled what to do. She could not go to her father, for he had already given her money for the payment of that and other bills, and she had lent it to Richard. She was ashamed to ask her aunt—she had borrowed from her so often.

"I haven't got the money, Mary," she said. "Can't she wait two or three days?"

"Not a day longer, she says, Miss Clara. This is the third time she has called."

Clara, vexed and mortified, was reduced to the necessity of borrowing the eight dollars from Mary and the cook.

Thus matters went on. Clara's efforts, though made at great self-sacrifice, at last became ineffectual to hide all Richard's misdeeds, and he was sent to boarding-school.

One night, about three months after his departure, she was sitting up in her own room to write some letters, when she was startled by a pebble thrown against the window. She listened a moment, and another struck the glass. Half fearfully she rose, and going to the window perceived a dark figure on the gravel walk below, who made signs for her to lift the sash.

"Cousin Clara," whispered a well known voice as she did so, "come down to the back door. I must speak to you."

Clara made the best of her way down stairs. When she opened the door Richard seized her arm, and drew her out into the portico and down the steps.

"Oh, Richard, Richard, how came you here!" said she.

"Hush, don't make any noise! I've run away from school. They provoked me till I could bear it no longer. I suppose they'll write to Uncle

Lathrop directly, and if I came home he'd force me back again, and I'll die before I set my foot there, so I am going off to New York."

"To New York, you foolish boy! What would you do there?"

"I'd get a living, some way, I could go in a store. And I want your help, Clara."

"My help! Do you think I'm going to help you to your own ruin?"

"It is not my own ruin. Clara, listen to me. I know that in past time I have often behaved very wrong, and I am sorry for it, but go back to that odious place I will not. If I can get to New York, and procure employment, I have made a solemn resolution to behave differently. My friends shall not be ashamed of me."

Richard spoke sadly, but firmly, and Clara could discern a different expression on his countenance from any it had ever worn before.

"Well, Richard, do be a little reasonable," said she. "Tell my father calmly and plainly what you want, and I am sure he will consent."

"Don't talk to me about that, Clara. I know very well what he would do. My uncle and I are two persons that had better never come in collision. I have a will as unbending as his own, and he has a temper as passionate as mine."

"But, Richard, Richard——"

"I will not be moved from my purpose, Clara, whether you help me or not. Hear me—I do solemnly swear, that come what will, I will not re-enter this house."

"Hush, oh! hush," exclaimed Clara, but the oath had been taken.

She burst into tears.

"Don't cry, Clara. Trust me, I shall get along in New York. But, Clara, I want some money to get there."

"I have only a few shillings."

"Is that all? I must have some money. Not only to take me there, but to support me till I get something to do."

"I know no way but to ask your mother for it."

"My mother! Are you crazy? She would go straight to Uncle Lathrop. I never in my life could get her to believe that he did not know how to manage me."

"What else can we do, Richard?"

"I don't know," said the boy.

"I wish from my heart I had some," said Clara.

There was a long silence. At last Richard looked up. "Well, good-bye, Clara. I must have money. Where I'll get it I don't know."

There was a desperation in the tone of Richard's voice that struck a new fear to Clara's heart.

What might not he be tempted to do to obtain money?

"Stay, Richard," she said, in a hoarse whisper, "I'll get some money for you."

"Where?"

"From my father's desk. He'll never miss it. I know where the key is."

Richard hesitated a long time. "Well, go, Clara," he said, at last. "The first money I get, I'll repay it."

Clara Lathrop's hands were quivering and cold, and her lips white as ashes, as she re-entered the house, and obtaining a light, stole with noiseless tread to her father's little study. She found the key and unlocked the desk—the bolt springing back with a noise that made her start and look over her shoulder with a sense of guilt and meanness new to her. Hastily drawing some money from a pocket-book, she turned the key again and put it back in its place. The throbbing in her throat almost choked her as she crept back to her cousin.

"My own Clara! thank you, thank you," said he. "No one else would have done so much for me."

"Richard," said Clara, in a husky voice, "promise me that you will use this money rightly—that you will spend it only on proper objects."

"I do promise you most solemnly, Clara."

"May you keep that promise. Go now—we may be discovered. I thought I heard a noise inside of the house."

Imprinting a kiss upon Clara's cold, pale cheek, Richard hastened away. Clara started with the speed of lightning, and paused not a moment till she gained her own room. Panting for breath, she gazed round. What had she done since she left it? Poor girl! no mother's lesson then echoed in her ear, and the still small voice within was almost silenced by the one idea which ruled her actions—if the purpose were good, no matter what the means. Still, an almost instinctive sense of wrong and a nervous apprehension glittered in her eye. How much wilder would have been those black eyes had she known that there had been a spectator of her hurried visit to her father's desk. She had been engaged to be married for nearly a year, and her lover, George Ives, the son of an old friend of her father's, was then paying them a visit. His attention attracted by a soft tread passing his door in the stillness of night, he had risen, and seen Clara go into her father's study, and then bewildered and almost horrified, had beheld the whole through the half open door. The light she held fell directly upon her pallid features, and revealed her trembling movements,

He heard her hard breathing as she passed the recess where he stood, and watched her till she went out of the back door. Should he follow her? While he deliberated she sprang through the doorway again, and flew up to her own room with the swiftness of a bird.

It is said that women have far more command of countenance than men. If so, Clara Lathrop had need the next morning of all her sex's power in that respect. Mr. Lathrop came down to breakfast looking very red and irritated.

"I have lost some money out of my desk," said he, "thirty dollars in gold. Either some one broke in last night, or we have some dishonest person about the house."

"Are you sure you had it in your desk," said Mrs. Stone.

"Sure? yes, certainly! I put it there only yesterday. Clara, you generally wake easily. Do you know anything about this?"

"No," said Clara, in a firm voice. As she spoke, she happened to glance toward George Ives who sat opposite, and met a look which sent the blood rushing to her brain. What could it mean—that stern, contemptuous gaze? While she sat, almost holding her breath in the effort to keep her countenance, her father, at the suggestion of his sister, had turned his vest pocket, and found a hole in it.

"It is possible," said, he, "that it slipped through this."

"Perhaps about the house," said Mrs. Stone. "We had better look."

Clara jumped up, and began to act her part in searching. She moved about the breakfast room, looking under couches, and pushing aside tables, while George Ives quietly watched her. The strongest trait in his character was a most uncompromising love of truth. Naturally rather severe and very straightforward, he hated all equivocations and trickery of every kind; and with the truest reverence for the female character, felt that nothing could be more disgusting and repelling than a lie in the mouth of a young girl. And now his own ears had borne shuddering witness to an unblushing falsehood from the lips of his affianced bride.

"Do you think I can have dropped it any place, Clara," said her father.

"I don't know, sir," said Clara.

As she spoke she looked up, and caught George Ives' piercing glance. Here was another direct departure from the truth. Others followed, in answer to her father's questions, till she was glad to leave the room to carry on her pretended search in another part of the house. With fevered heart and hand she went on, till even her father

was satisfied, and said he must have dropped the money in the street, abandoning his idea that it had been stolen. Then she locked herself into her own room, and covering her guilty face, threw herself down on the floor. She could not doubt that George Ives knew all—his glances were yet flashing in her brain. But how had he learned it? and what was left for her to do now? Then came to her mind, with quickness startling to herself, many different explanations of what she had said, but she could fix upon none, for she was uncertain how much her lover had seen or heard. Sorrow and shame for discovery, and dread of the consequences filled her eyes with bitter tears, while she tried in vain to think. An hour passed. A servant knocked at the door with a message that Mr. Ives wished to see her a few minutes. Her moment of trial had come.

"Clara," said George, as she entered the parlor, "perhaps what I intend saying takes away from me all right to ask an explanation of what I overheard and saw, but in justice to yourself, I will request it. You know very well to what I allude."

Clara would fain have had more to guide her in her answer, but it came not. She began to stammer forth broken sentences, she hardly knew what. George Ives listened with a curling lip, till at last he broke in impetuously,

"No more, Clara, no more! Degrade yourself no further. I see it is vain to expect frankness from you. I would have asked you the motive of the midnight thievery—call it by its true name—and the morning falsehoods—but no matter. It was doubtless mean as the things themselves. We must part now and forever. I forgive you the unhappiness you have caused me."

"Oh, George, George, listen to me one moment," exclaimed Clara.

"Listen to you! What for? To hear you exhaust yourself in vain endeavors to blind my eyes."

"Oh, if you knew all," she murmured.

"Why don't you tell me all then?"

"I will, on one condition—that you will not tell my father."

"I will make no conditions."

"Then I cannot tell you."

"As you please. Let us part at once then."

"Oh, no, no. Wait, and—and I will tell you," and Clara poured forth her whole story.

"And was there no restraining voice in your soul, Clara, whispering that however many sacrifices you might make for Dick, this was not within the pale?"

"I could not—I could not see him leave me so," she said.

George Ives paced the room for some time, and then approached the weeping girl.

"Clara, my poor, misguided Clara, farewell."

"Oh, George, you will not say that cruel word!"

"I pity you from my soul, but we never could be happy together. I never could take for my wife one so destitute of principle."

"George, I am willing to swear to you that I will never again do anything of the kind."

"I believe you, and believe you would be able to keep your promise, too; and I remember the fact that what you took was your father's, and the principle that would keep your hand from any other's property, might fail you there; but, Clara, there is wanting an inherent respect for truth, without which confidence would be impossible for me."

"George, do not judge me by one instance. When I had committed a fault, I had to conceal it."

"Clara, I cannot deceive myself. No one not long and well practised in dissimulation, could have spoken and acted falsehoods, as composedly as you did this morning. I never could live happily with you. The memory of this would continually come up between us, like a dark cloud, and be the seed of many evils. You may think me unnecessarily harsh, but I cannot help it. I shall always be your friend, Clara—oh, more than friend. I now warn you to stop short in the career you have begun. As for your secret, I will not betray it."

They parted. Clara with her bleeding and desolate soul, had no earthly refuge where she could claim sympathy, and heaven was dark above her. With a heart kind enough, tender enough, full enough of love for others, to awaken the strongest affection and admiration, she yet was utterly lonely and miserable. If the slightest ray of hope had illumined the darkness, it might have brought with it some of the spirit of life, but there was none.

She kept her room all that day, but toward evening forced herself to go down into the parlor. On taking up the paper, the first thing she saw was a notice of her father's advertising the lost gold. Sick at heart, she was laying down the sheet, when her father said, "Clara, see if my advertisement is there, and read it."

How could she read that? At last, summoning all her strength, she read the lines in a voice in which a keen observer might have detected the cadence of misery. She had more to bear that evening. George Ives had gone, and she had calmly to explain the dissolution of their engagement. Her father, cross and disappointed,

asked many questions, and Clara, her heart shivering and quivering, had to answer all steadily. About nine o'clock, Mr. Lathrop came in from the post-office with a letter from Richard's school master, announcing his disappearance. Clara had to act her part of surprise and sorrow.

In a few days Mrs. Stone received a letter from Richard, telling her to set her heart at rest about him, he was well and doing well. And as time went on, Clara had the satisfaction to see that what she had endured had not been in vain. But with what mingled feelings did she receive Dick's letters, always filled with expressions of attachment and gratitude? He never knew what her affection for him had cost her.

Two years more, and Clara needed another lesson to check her in her dangerous course, and this time it was a fearful one. Her uncle, Captain Stone, the father of Richard and Charley, came back from a voyage. He was an officer in the navy, a good and noble man, and his health being much enfeebled, had come home to recruit, he said, but it was evident to all that he never more would see "the wild wave's crested foam." Clara had been his pet when a child, and always loved him dearly, and she now cheered his decline by many tender attentions. Soon he became unable to leave his room, and she was his constant companion, and after a time his nurse, for Mrs. Stone was taken ill of a violent fever. One day he expressed a wish to have Richard sent for, and one week from that time he died in his arms—his last breath entreating the assembled family to meet him in heaven. Poor Mrs. Stone was delirious at the time, and knew nothing of her husband's death; but the day before the funeral, she recovered her senses, and when Clara entered the room in the morning, the first question was, "how is your uncle?"

Clara hesitated. George Ives' oft-recollected warning rung in her ears. But the truth might throw her aunt back into delirium.

"He is better, dear aunt, quite comfortable," she replied.

"I wish I was able to see him," said Mrs. Stone.

"Oh, no, no, aunt—do not think of it to-day."

"Your manner seems strange, Clara. Are you telling me the truth? I feel strong enough to bear it, even it should be the worst."

"Indeed I am. You need not alarm yourself about my uncle."

"Well, I shall see him to-morrow," said Mrs. Stone, with a smile.

A woman's shriek, wrung from the very depths of despair, is a fearful sound. The ear on which

it ever has fallen will never lose the memory of it. Such was the shriek that broke the stillness of Mr. Lathrop's house that night. It rung from the chamber of death, and all rushed thither.

The watchers stood in mute dismay, while extended upon the shrouded corpse was the form of Mrs. Stone. They tried to loose the frantic grasp, and raise her from the cold bosom, but it was only separating those now united in death. Clara Lathrop, with a face pale with horror, saw her father and friends try every method to rekindle the lamp of life. The physician came, and placing his hand upon the brow so quickly clothed with an expression of perfect peace, shook his head. And Clara sunk down beside the dead husband and wife, and wished that she might share their pulseless slumber. Ay! she prayed to die. "Surely my Maker will take me from the world," she groaned, "for I am not fit to live. This is my work."

"Your work! What do you mean Clara?" said her father.

"I concealed my poor uncle's death from my aunt this morning, and made her believe he was better. I was afraid the shock would be too great. And, now, look there! My punishment is greater than I can bear."

Without a word, Mr. Lathrop raised the fainting girl in his arms, and carrying her to her bed, left her not for many hours, for reason deserted her throne.

It was never known how Mrs. Stone came to seek her husband's chamber, but her friends supposed, that being awake in the still night-

watches, she had been wishing to see him, and had risen to steal a look at him. Those who watched with the corpse had been startled by a slight rustling, and looking round saw a tall form clothed in white standing in the centre of the room, and then heard that one piercing scream, in which life had fled.

"God giveth his beloved sleep," said those who stood beside the single grave in which the dead were placed; and then they returned to the bedside of the living, to see what it was that He had given unto her who had put His commandments far from her.

Did Clara Lathrop die of a broken heart? No, people don't die of broken hearts now-a-days, notwithstanding all Washington Irving says to the contrary.

"The heart may break, yet breakingly live on."

She rose from her sick bed to look upon little Charley's orphan face by day, and to see by night that death-chamber, with its two cold corpses, rise before her. But the eye that watches over us is one of love, and she was led ere long to the only Hand that can heal the wounds that quiver and burn within the festering spirit. Trustfully, but sadly, she lifted her eyes to the radiance which she knew streamed from the land whence "sorrow and sighing shall flee away." Earth's waters, thrown into such wild turmoil by her own hand, became "still," and earth's pastures "green." "A bruised reed will He not break, and the smoking flax will He not quench."

THE HONITON COLLAR.

BY ELLEN ASHTON.

Two young ladies were making purchases at the principal store of a considerable inland town.

"You should buy this, Miss Empson," said the dealer in dry-goods, holding up a beautiful collar, delicate almost as gossamer work. "It's a real Honiton."

The young lady, however, shook her head. But her companion, looking at it longingly, asked, after a moment, what the price was.

"Seven dollars, miss," was the answer. "It ought to be more, but the collar is too costly for my customers generally, and I am willing to sell it for cost."

"It is very beautiful," said Miss Darlington, hesitatingly; and, she took it into her hands, the better to examine it.

"Just try the effect of it over your dress," put in the store-keeper. "There's nothing so elegant as a Honiton. No French worked collar can compare with it. And it's the only one in town, I assure you."

Miss Darlington tried the effect of it, as he desired, and was even more pleased than before. The assertion that there was no other in town also had its influence, for what young lady is there who does not like to be exclusive in the possession of an article? But there was a reason, which she scarcely acknowledged to herself, yet which disposed her, more than all else, to purchase the collar: and this was that, in a few days, there was to be a large party, where all the belles of the town would be assembled, and where Horace Mordaunt, the handsomest and richest young bachelor of the place, who had just returned from a tour in Europe, would make his first appearance in society.

She turned to Miss Empson, however, and asked her opinion.

"What do you think, Clara?" she said, the Honiton lying over her hand. "Wouldn't you buy it?"

"It is very pretty," said her companion. "But I can't afford anything so costly."

Miss Darlington colored, but her desire to possess the collar increased with opposition, instead of getting weaker.

"It's true," she replied, "seven dollars is a good deal to pay for a collar, but I can save it, you know, off the rest of my dress. I will not buy so expensive a frock as I had intended."

"But would it be in keeping?"

"Oh! to be sure. You know that its particularly genteel to have elegant collars, gloves and shoes: it's the way, I'm told, that a real lady is always discovered at a glance in the city."

This conversation had been carried on, in whispers, and a little apart. The store-keeper, suspecting that Miss Empson was not recommending the purchase, now interrupted the fair speakers.

"If you only knew how cheap that collar was, Miss Darlington," he said, "I know you wouldn't hesitate. I bought it, to clear out a lot, it being the last, and so got it at what it cost to import. I offer it now at what I paid for it; not a cent more, I repeat, do I ask."

This argument was conclusive. Next to having the monopoly of an article of ornament or dress, a lady likes best to get what our sex calls "a great bargain;" and so Miss Darlington paid the seven dollars, and became the possessor of a real Honiton.

The party came off duly, and the Honiton collar was there of course, where it made no little stir. Some, who had never seen such a thing, vowed enviously that it was a coarse-looking affair. Others, who knew how highly fashion rated this particular article, quite coveted it. Miss Darlington endeavored not to look conscious, though, all the time, she secretly believed that she was the "observed of all observers." She was especially confident that Horace Mordaunt was looking at her.

Her friend Clara was there also. Dressed in pure white, with a few natural flowers in her hair, she looked like a poet's ideal of virgin simplicity and loveliness. No greater contrast, indeed, could be presented than between her and Miss Darlington. The incongruity of the latter's attire was as striking as the good taste that reigned in every part of Clara's. The Honiton collar, in short, as compared with the rest of Miss Darlington's costume, was like a capitol of Italian marble placed on the summit of a brick pedestal. As Clara had hinted, it was "out of keeping."

There was another person, besides Clara, who appeared to think so. Horace Mordaunt had, indeed, looked fixedly at Miss Darlington on her entrance, but it was with a scarcely concealed

smile at the bad taste of the Honiton collar. He had been expecting her appearance, with some curiosity, for he remembered her as one of the most beautiful girls of the place, and he had been wondering whether she would be improved or not. In truth he had thought oftener of her, during his absence, than he would have been willing to acknowledge. More than once, when he had seen a beautiful face abroad, he had involuntarily compared it with that of Miss Darlington; and rarely had he thought hers less lovely than it.

Perhaps, if he had recollected no other countenance, he would have returned actually in love. But there was another, who divided his thoughts, as she divided the palm of beauty with Miss Darlington. Our readers have already suspected that we speak of Clara.

Miss Empson made her appearance later than her friend. One of the first to recognize her was Horace Mordaunt, who started instinctively at this vision of perfect loveliness. The face and form, which he had carried so long in his memory, were there, more beautiful, if possible, than of old. But, perhaps, he was more attracted by the exquisite taste of her dress than even by the improvement in her personal appearance, for his travels had made him fastidious in this respect. He sought accordingly a renewal of his former acquaintance with Clara, and, when Miss Darlington looked around for him, wondering why he had not approached her before, she saw, with a pang of envy, that he was talking to Clara, apparently deeply interested.

Later in the evening, however, Miss Darlington succeeded in attracting him to her own side, for a while, by challenging his attention, asking him, laughingly, if he had forgotten his old friends. But he did not remain long with her. The instant that Clara became disengaged from a temporary partner, he flew to her again, and in so marked a manner as to attract general notice.

The acquaintance, thus renewed, progressed with astonishing rapidity. Horace Mordaunt soon neglected all other society for that of Clara. Her amiability and good sense, indeed, soon changed the admiration, which her loveliness had created, into fervent love. The more Horace Mordaunt saw of her, the more he felt her superiority to all other women, whom he had ever met. Nor was he one whose personal qualities would have allowed him to sue in vain. Even had he not been so wealthy, Clara would have loved him all the same; for he united a highly cultivated intellect to a heart as tender almost as a woman's, and to a person of great manly beauty: in a word, in looks, manners, and conversation he was the *beau ideal* of a hero.

For once the "course of true love" *did* "run smooth." Horace Mordaunt proposed, was accepted, and, in due time, became the husband of Clara, nor was there a single person but thought it a suitable match, unless perhaps Miss Darlington.

"Do you know," said Horace, one day, laughingly, to his new wife, "that you nearly missed being Mrs. Mordaunt? You mustn't be jealous, but when I returned, I could not make up my mind which I liked best, you or Miss Darlington. But a Honiton collar turned the balance." And laughing even more gaily, as he saw his beautiful bride's astonishing look, he continued, "I met you both, you recollect, at Mrs. Pride's party. Well, you were dressed, as you always are, in perfect taste, and by that I mean the whole attire in harmony: but Miss Darlington, with rather a common frock, had an expensive Honiton collar. I said to myself there is a type of their difference in minds, one all for show, the other modest and sensible. And so, on a nearer intimacy, I found you both. Believe me, dearest, it is by little things that character is to be judged; and your old school-mate betrayed hers most egregiously by her HONITON COLLAR."

LILLIAN ELSINGER;

OR, THE POOR RELATIONS.

BY MARY L. MEANY.

CHAPTER I.

"GRACIOUS me! what assurance!" exclaimed Miss Albina Elsinger, looking up with an air of surprise and scorn, from a letter which she had been reading.

"What is it, Albina?" asked her mother, with evident interest. "Not a proposal, I hope, from that silly coxcomb, who last evening——"

"Pshaw!" interrupted the young lady, with a curl of her pretty lip; "nothing of the kind. It is from people claiming our name and begging assistance, mere impostors, of course—though the writer says that my father's uncle, Gerald Elsinger, was her maternal grandfather; that her mother married her cousin, Arthur Elsinger, and, but surely, mamma, this *cannot* be true!" continued the speaker, in a tone of alarm, as she observed the astonishment of her mother, caused by this unlooked-for revelation, "these beggarly people cannot belong to us."

"Perhaps they may: but what more?"

"Oh, she says her father was a sea captain, and was shipwrecked during a return voyage nearly two years ago; and the brig, together with a large amount of money he had on board being lost, her widowed mother, herself, and a little brother, named Gerald, are in circumstances far from comfortable, being entirely dependant on their own exertions. And her motive in writing to me is that she thinks from my *own* feelings I may imagine her anxiety to aid as much as possible her bereaved parent; and will, therefore, use my influence with you to obtain the grant of the request, which is the purport of the letter."

"Indeed—and what is that?"

"Oh! a very reasonable one in her estimation, I dare say. Merely that you will engage her as governess for the younger children: or should you wish them educated from home, that you will promise them as pupils in the boarding-school, which, in that case, she will undertake. And also, that you will kindly interest yourself to obtain the patronage of some of your numerous friends for the proposed establishment. Her teachers, she adds, will satisfy you as to her qualifications."

"And what care I for her qualifications?" exclaimed the elder lady, reddening with anger.

"A pretty proposal, truly—for me to take into my house one who would arrogate respect and attention on the score of kindred; or send away my children to furnish a theme of conversation for our acquaintances. A *governess*—a *school ma'am*—honorable relationships, indeed, to trumpet forth to the world! Uncle Gerald's daughter may thank herself for her uncomfortable circumstances; she was warned before her imprudent marriage, but to no purpose. A girl like her, who might have chosen amongst the noblest of the land, to fall in love with her father's ward, a poor, orphan boy; and, moreover, one of those miserable, improvident fellows that never will accumulate wealth, be their opportunities what they may."

"But what did her father think of her choice?"

"Oh, he doated on the young fellow—he was the only child of his favorite brother, and had been his ward from childhood; so he could not be persuaded that his daughter's foolish fancy was anything but what it should be. She was then only fifteen, and he had always resolved that she should not marry until her eighteenth year. In the meantime he appointed his nephew captain of one of his ships, and when the appointed time arrived, finding them still as much attached as ever, he gave them a handsome wedding, and established them in a small, but rather elegant dwelling; and the bride was as well satisfied as if it had been a palace. She had no higher ambition, poor thing! and in this, at least, she suited her husband, who thought wealth was of little value except to assist the poor. *His own poor* now will hardly find people of the same mind, I fancy."

Albina listened attentively to these details, altogether new to her; for although the memory of the wealthy and widely-known "Uncle Gerald" was treasured in her father's house, and she had been taught to pride herself not a little on the relationship, she had never till now heard of the daughter who had gradually sunk into obscurity; her imprudent marriage rendering her of course below par in the eyes of most of her former associates. Albina, therefore, was considerably surprised to learn that such a person really existed.

"I wonder," she at length said, "that Uncle

Gerald did not leave them sufficient to place them where they would want the residue of their lives."

"You forget that upon his death, which happened shortly after his daughter's marriage, his second wife who had the possession of his money and massive plate, sacrificed his vast estate, and very soon disappeared with her son, at that time a mere child; and has never since been heard of. There could be found no will, and it was given out that his sudden demise prevented his making one; but I shall always believe that *that woman* destroyed it, to further her designs."

And here Mrs. Elsinger paused, overcome by angry feelings, for, notwithstanding her own and husband's hoarded wealth, she still sighed for a portion of his deceased uncle's, or, at least, the "massive plate." Albina was about to speak when her father entered the apartment; and to the august tribunal of his unbiased judgment the matter was quickly referred. After many remarks upon the letter and its author, all proving only the superlative selfishness of each member of the worthy trio, Mr. Elsinger decided that the best plan was for his daughter to write an immediate reply which he would dictate. To this the young lady poutingly objected; "papa or mamma might write if they saw proper, she had no intention of troubling herself to send any answer to those impertinent persons." But when papa insisted that she was the most suitable one to reply; reminding her, moreover, that in the event of their receiving none they might write again, or horrors of horrors presume to appear before their rich relatives. Albina' frowning brow was at once cleared, and she took her pen and quickly wrote to the dictation of her purse-proud father:

"MISS ELSINGER—In reply to your letter which has just been received, my mother desires me to state that she has no disposition to comply with either of the proposals it contains,

ALBINA ELSINGER."

"That will do—that will answer every purpose exactly—one should never condescend to indite an elaborate reply to individuals of this kind!" and the portly speaker surveyed with much complacency the note which was now placed in his hand to be safely deposited in the post-office—his lady shrewdly suggesting that if it were given to one of the servants, he might remark upon the direction amongst his fellows. Miss Albina, perceiving that it was time to dress for the reception of some morning visitors whom she anxiously expected, retired for that purpose; while her father lingered a few moments to hear from his wife an account of two strange gentlemen who had been particularly attentive to Albina on the

previous evening. Possessing a tolerable share of beauty and wit, and being, moreover, the favorite child of a very wealthy man, Miss Elsinger had of course many aspirants for the honor of her hand; and the respective claims of each competitor were now, as was frequently their custom, discussed with due earnestness by the gratified parents of the prize. Strange that amid their mutual gratulations on a subject so interesting to both, no thought of the widowed mother, of the destitute daughter, who had appealed to them for such a trifling favor, intruded: that no whisper of remorse for the heartless and insulting manner in which that favor was refused, disturbed the composure of their self-complacent minds. Strange still that in the young heart of seventeen no gentle chord responded, with womanly sympathy, to the earnest appeal of one of kindred age and blood; that, as the gay and petted child of fortune sat in her luxurious dressing-room, while the nimble fingers of her maid tastefully arranged the heavy folds of her beautiful hair, her thoughts never reverted from the gay anticipations of the coming season, to the cheerless life of toil and penury spread out before the young girl who had ventured to pen a brief outline of her difficulties and anxieties; perhaps secretly longing for a few kind sentences of sympathy and encouragement, even should her request for assistance in her proposed task be denied. Ah, money! money! How often dost thou, much coveted and fearfully abused gift! seem to chase away from thy gorgeous dwelling-places every other treasure. And yet how many of the lowly and despised children of poverty might bestow a pitying glance upon thy envied possessors, and cherish with earnest gratitude their own priceless treasures of mind and heart, which thou, with all thy wizard power, canst never bestow.

CHAPTER I.

FAR down in a smiling valley, at the foot of a gently sloping hill, whose carpet of softest green was embroidered with many a beautiful wild flower, stood a small, humble cottage. The lapse of many years had worn away much of what beauty it might once have displayed; but the graceful foliage of the wild rose crept lovingly over the time-stained walls, and around the casement windows, until even the lowly eaves were adorned with its modest blossoms; and the little casements were curtained with muslin of snowy whiteness, which, gleaming out here and there through the interlacing vines, gave an air of neatness and comfort to the humble abode. The

garden in front was gemmed, in their season, with roses, lillacs, violets, and many other flowers, which bore evidence of careful and judicious cultivation; and a little stream of sparkling water that danced brightly over smooth, white pebbles, gave a beautiful verdure to the long, silken grass that fringed its borders. Behind the house was an orchard of considerable extent, with thrifty trees of various flavored fruits; and beyond this, dense forests raised their proud heads to the tranquil skies above; so that no glimpse of the busy world, with its fevered dreams and idle fancies, obtruded; but it seemed a holy spot, where, shut in amidst the sweet communion of nature, the world-wearied spirit might pass away the brief dream of life, awaiting the welcome summons to unfurl its long-prisoned pinions, and leave the earthly tenement to fall asleep like the drooping flowers, and repose beneath the spreading trees, until called forth by its Creator to be renewed in immortal strength and beauty.

On a fine, autumnal eve, two females walked slowly and in silence along the little garden. The elder, whose health seemed rather frail, and whose mild, expressive features bore traces of much sorrow, patiently endured, leaned upon the arm of her companion, an exceedingly fair girl, in the first bloom of maidenhood, whose care in supporting the feeble form that leaned so confidently upon her, showed, not only the sacred tie that bound them, but also the love and reverence by which it was hallowed.

"You will receive no letter from Louisville, I fear, Lillian," said the elder lady, at length breaking the long silence.

"Oh! it is yet scarcely time to expect one, dear mother," was the reply. "I wrote only a week ago, and, of course, they will take some time to consider my proposition ere they reply."

"Is it only a week? Alas! I thought it was nearly two!" exclaimed the mother, with a half-suppressed sigh. "Anxiety and uncertainty make the days seem very long and tedious; though they should now pass all too swiftly, since we are aware that we must leave our long-loved home so soon."

"Mother, I sometimes think that Mr. Brown will postpone building till after his travels, and then we should not be obliged to leave this dear spot for a long time."

"There is no hope of that. I met old Mr. Brown in the orchard this morning, and learned that his son is firm in his intention to have the place cleared, that he may witness the commencement of his future home ere he sets out. The old gentleman would rather postpone the work for a time, but, he said, his son will not listen to this proposal."

"Well, I only hope that he may find as much contentment in the grand building he will erect here, as we have enjoyed in the little cot. I am afraid we shall not be so happy else where; but," she checked herself, lest her words might add to her mother's sadness, and spoke more cheerfully, "I know so little of the world, how should I judge? We may, perhaps, yet have a home prettier and dearer than even this."

"Our happiness, my love, depends not on the beauty of our abode, but on the dispositions we bring to it, or our readiness to conform ourselves to our present circumstances whatever they may be. In the humblest walks of life, and amid many cares and trials, we may, if we will, experience contentment; even as your own rose vine blooms not less brightly around our lowly dwelling than if it were a home of wealth and magnificence."

While Mrs. Elsinger thus spoke a horseman had rode up to the white garden-paling, and, recognizing a gentleman from the neighboring village, they went forward to meet him.

"I bring you a letter, Miss Lillian," said he, after the usual greetings had been exchanged.

"Oh, thank you!" said Lillian, a glow of delight suffusing her fine features. "This is, indeed, a pleasing surprise, for I did not expect it for several days to come."

"I heard Mrs. Elsinger yesterday speak of expecting a letter shortly; so, happening to remember it while I was getting my own, I inquired." And with a friendly "good-bye," the gentleman rode away. Lillian's hand trembled with nervous eagerness, as she re-entered the cottage with her mother, and broke the seal of the letter, which she knew by the post-mark was the one she desired. How little suspicion had she of its contents! In the guilelessness of her young heart, no doubt of the kindness of her unknown relatives had ever disturbed her; and it was with the eagerness of joyful anticipation that she glanced at the few brief lines before her. Ah, what a chill was that which fell upon her bounding heart! Lillian's first feeling as she perused the heartless response was one of indignation; but a glance at her mother, who sat anxiously regarding her, changed her mood; and a burst of uncontrollable grief told that tender parent the tale she had expected, yet dreaded to hear.

"I thought it would be thus," she said, calmly, as she embraced her beloved child. "I feared this result, my own sweet girl. But you have consolation in the knowledge that you obeyed the quick impulse of your devoted affection; and though the effort was vain, it is not less precious

in the eyes of God—nor less grateful to your mother's heart. But, my child, learn from this not to indulge too sanguine expectations in future; where the anticipation is so great, the reaction of disappointment must be proportionally severe."

"Oh, mother—if they were unwilling to grant my request, which would cost them so little, and to us would be an inestimable benefit, why could they not, at least, have refused it kindly, and not in this unfeeling manner;" and she placed before her mother the brief note, on whose composition the haughty man of wealth had so prided himself. Mrs. Elsinger paused an instant after reading it, ere she replied,

"Do not let this rob us of our peace of mind, my daughter; but endeavor, if possible, to forget the circumstance. We have not hitherto possessed either the friendship or assistance of those with whom we are connected, and we have not on that account been the less happy. Why, therefore, should we now distress ourselves because they have seen proper to act in this manner. And with regard to the other families to whom you intended to make a like proposal, I do not now wish you to do so. We will want one or two rooms in the village, and between your embroidery and some plain sewing which I can easily do from time to time, we can live comfortably. Nay, do not shake your head, my child, you know my health is very nearly restored, and without any detriment to it, I can henceforth aid you some little: our expenses are not very great."

"But Gerald's expenses at school are considerable, united to our own."

"He will have to leave school, and find some employment," replied Mrs. Elsinger. "It seems hard, but it is the only course."

"No, no, mother, I must write to the other ladies you have told me of; perhaps I may yet be successful."

The young girl rose as she spoke, with an air of calm resolve; and, as it was growing late, the mother tenderly kissed her snowy forehead, and with a silent benediction on her devoted child, retired to her own little chamber, where she for a time freely indulged the sorrow which in her daughter's presence she had restrained. But remembering the source whence she had often obtained strength and comfort under trying circumstances, she recommended herself and children to the care of the Protector of the widow and the fatherless; and with a mind calmed and soothed by the very fervency of her supplications, sought her couch to obtain a temporary forgetfulness of her cares.

Not so Lillian. She had deferred writing to some of her mother's former friends through respect to those of her own kindred. The result of her application to them was now before her, and although well nigh dispirited and hopeless of success, she determined not to retire to rest until the remainder of her task were accomplished. The letters were accordingly penned, but very briefly, and in a timid, diffident style, which, although in her present gloomy mood she did not observe, could not fail of being noticed by a sympathetic mind; for the issue of her first attempt rendered her painfully averse to repeating it; but her affection for her young brother, and desire to dispense her mother from the necessity of exertion, strengthened her resolution. Hitherto her skill and taste in embroidery, aided by a small sum which Mrs. Elsinger had at the time of her sad bereavement, had sufficed for their support: but for the future they had not this resource to depend upon, while their expenses would be necessarily increased in the event of their removal to the village. Thus the prospect was gloomy in the extreme, which was deepened by the pain they felt on being obliged to leave the cottage, where they had spent several happy years, and where, also, they had borne with becoming resignation the trials that had befallen them.

In anxious uncertainty Lillian saw the time arrive which should put an end to her doubts and fears, but she was disappointed. Another day passed, and then came two letters from persons on whom she most relied. One stated the writer's inability to employ a governess; but added that if Miss Elsinger succeeded in establishing a boarding-school, she would willingly send her two oldest daughters; the other merely mentioned that her children were too young to be sent to a boarding-school, and she was opposed to having teachers in the house. The next day a heavy rain prevented her going to the post-office; but in the evening their village friend brought the remainder of the anxiously expected letters. Poor Lillian! Well she knew the bitter trial of those who are dependant on others for assistance in their projects, as she sat with clasped hands looking at the unopened letters, for she had yet a little, lingering hope which those unconscious messengers might too quickly dispel. At length they were opened—alas! for the airy productions of her hope—she bowed her head upon the table and wept aloud.

"But there is another remaining, my child," said her mother, in a faltering voice.

"I cannot read it—indeed I cannot," sobbed the distressed girl.

"Mysweet child, be calm, I entreat you. Read this; we will then know the worst, and endeavor to think of some other plan."

With a deep sigh Lillian opened the letter; it was rather longer than the others, and as she glanced over it, a glow of delight suffused her face. "Oh, mother," she exclaimed, "how impatient and petulant I have been! Forgive me, but first let me read this, it is from the dear friend you so often speak of:" and with a voice trembling with joy, Lillian read:

"MY DEAR YOUNG FRIEND—I must apologize for not having sooner answered your letter on the ground of my absence from home when I received it, and consequent inability to consult my husband on its contents. I take the first leisure moment after my return to write, and in doing so cannot refrain from mentioning the pain which the diffident style of your letter caused me. Ah, my dear girl, you say that your mother and myself were once warmly attached friends: but I fear she retains a very faint remembrance of my sincere regard for her, since her daughter has addressed me in such timid, mistrusting language: but I shall have many opportunities to sould you on this score, so shall now drop it.

"I was, indeed, a friend of your mother's, Lillian, at that sweet age when friendship is worthy of the name, ere interest or guile has warped the heart's affections; and the best proof I can give of the depth and sincerity of that attachment is my delight at being enabled to co-operate in your project to support your mother and brother by your exertions. It is, indeed, a noble resolve, Lilla, and will, I am sure, be well rewarded by the joy your affectionate heart will experience in their welfare. My husband is quite willing that you should undertake the tuition of our little ones, and only fears that you may have ere this formed an engagement elsewhere. But if so, my dear, you must break it, for I shall look forward to your arrival very shortly, and you must not in any case disappoint me. I am getting a room fitted up for you adjoining a very pleasant one which I intend for your mother, and shall be delighted to see them so well occupied. Tell my dear friend that I anticipate many a pleasant hour with her, recalling the reminiscences of our happy girlhood. I learned through the newspapers her sad bereavement, and wrote to express my sympathy in her affliction; but perhaps the letter failed to reach its destination. I doubt not that she bowed with Christian resignation to the chastening hand that smote her so suddenly; and in the love of her children and the affection of her friends I trust she will find much happiness for many years to come.

"Write as soon as you receive this, my dear girl, and tell me when I may expect your arrival. Let it be at as early a period as possible; and in the meantime assure yourself that I remain, your own and your mother's sincere friend,

TERESA IRWIN."

A long silence followed the reading of this

letter; but the hearts of the mother and child were throbbing with joy and gratitude, and many a silent prayer ascended from both for her who had opened for them a cheering prospect at the moment when hope was almost forsaking them.

"I am indeed ashamed of my impatience," said Lillian, looking up through the joyous tears that bedewed her bright eyes. "I shall never again, I trust, give way to such sinful feelings."

"The resolution is not above your strength, my love," said the fond mother; "impatience is not one of your usual faults, though of late you have been sorely tried. Dear Theresa!" she continued, as she glanced over the letter, "how like is this to what I remember of her: the ever ready sympathy with others which distinguished her even in childhood, and rendered her the pet of all. But come, my child, we have yet much to do; this is our last week here; write immediately to Mrs. Irwin to this effect. Blessed be He who has thus provided us a home, at the time of our greatest need."

Beautiful was the reply which Lillian Elsinger wrote to her new friend; eloquent, because her relieved and grateful heart poured forth its rich, deep feelings. The only thing she had dreaded in her new situation, a separation from her beloved parent, was rendered unnecessary through the kindness of her employers, in offering an apartment in their house for her use, and this unexpected favor lightened much of the pain that both naturally experienced in leaving their old home.

CHAPTER III.

MRS. IRWIN was a "lady" in the highest and fullest sense of the term, with all those noble qualities of the mind and heart, those generous impulses which render their possessor a valuable member of society—a blessing to all within the sphere of their influence. She was a native of Baltimore, whence, on the event of her marriage, she removed to Louisville, in the elegant society of which city she at once took a high position. Her husband was numbered among the wealthy and influential men of the state, and was in every respect a noble model of the true "Kentucky gentleman." Frank, generous, and open-hearted, he willingly concurred with his excellent lady in her numerous works of benevolence; and though his name was ever prominent amongst the contributors to public charities, he did not neglect instances of a less obtrusive, but perhaps really more philanthropic nature, in which his bounty was known only to its recipient, and to heaven's approving angels. Hence, many who wondered why the Irwins, with all their wealth, did not

make more "show," had they followed the light footsteps of Mrs. Irwin on her errands of mercy, would have found the results of their refraining from extravagant and useless expenditure, in the many comforts which cheered the lonely heart of the widow—in the neat apparel and healthy, comfortable appearance of many little fatherless ones as they daily took the walk to school—in the care bestowed on the helpless invalid, the little delicacies and numberless kindnesses by which the bed of poverty and sickness is robbed of its terrors—and again in the respectable funeral of many who would else have been given up to the dispensers of city charity, to be hurried away to a *pauper's* place in the receptacle provided for the remains of those who, being poor, are unworthy of a grave among their more favored *Christian* fellow mortals.

Mrs. Irwin was the mother of six lovely and intelligent children; the two oldest, youths of the ages of fourteen and sixteen, were pupils at a neighboring institute—and four little girls, ranging from twelve to five years, were to be henceforth under Lillian Elsinger's tuition.

Mrs. Elsinger and her daughter were received on their arrival at Mr. Irwin's, with a friendliness which spoke volumes for the kind-heartedness of the family, amongst whom they were to be numbered. To Mrs. Elsinger the reception was most grateful. There was no look nor tone of condescending kindness which could remind her that her circumstances had changed since she was the companion of her hostess—that from the daughter of a wealthy and respected man, she had become the wife—the widow—of one unblest by the possession of riches; and was now dependant on the talents of her child for a livelihood. The greeting was such as she might have looked for in the days of her brightest prospects—warm, cordial, and friendly; and Lillian, rendered timid and distrustful by the experience of the last few weeks, felt her spirits revive as she responded gratefully to the kindness extended to her so freely.

The fatigue of travelling, added to the anxiety she had previously undergone, had very much debilitated Mrs. Elsinger; which her friend, soon perceiving, led the way to the rooms prepared for her guests, and left them to recruit their strength by quietness and repose. It was now nearly two o'clock, the usual dinner hour of the Irwins; (who in this as well as in other respects were too thoroughly American to adopt European habits) but Mrs. Irwin's experience and instinctive kindness had taught her how distressing it is to travellers to be obliged to make a hasty toilet in order to join a circle of strangers

at the table, and accordingly a tidy, smart-looking servant girl soon appeared with a tray containing a repast of tea, bread, butter, biscuits, dried beef, cheese, and a plain, home-made cake, which she placed before the strangers, saying, "that her mistress thought they would prefer a cup of tea to a regular dinner as they must be much fatigued." Mrs. Elsinger assured her that her mistress had judged rightly; and having ascertained that nothing farther was needed, the servant quietly left them to enjoy the first meal in their new home by themselves—a privilege which our travellers well knew how to appreciate.

The house was a large and old-fashioned one, with spacious halls running through the centre in each story. The rooms allotted to the strangers were on the second floor, opposite to those occupied by the family, and consisted of the front chamber which was assigned to Mrs. Elsinger, another of the same dimensions for her daughter, and beyond this a neat, little apartment admirably fitted for reading or sewing, and which was to be for Lillian's leisure hours, entirely secluded from intrusion. In this pleasant room they were now seated, conversing cheerfully of their situation so widely different from what they might have ventured to anticipate; until, their comfortable meal being finished, they retired to take a few hours rest.

At tea time Lillian first met Mr. Irwin, who shook her hand warmly, welcoming her to his house, and introduced the children, severally, to her notice. Their sparkling eyes as she embraced, and spoke to each in her peculiarly sweet tones, accorded with what the parents told of the eagerness with which they had expected her. To the inquiries respecting her mother, Lillian replied "that she was in a deep slumber, from which she did not like to arouse her, as she knew that she would not miss her supper on account of having dined such a short time previous." Mrs. Irwin commended her thoughtfulness in not disturbing her mother, saying, "that she would enjoy her ten much more after sleep." They took their seats around the well stored board, and the conversation was animated and interesting. Lillian was surprised to find how insensibly she lost the timidity which was natural to one in her situation. Only once did she feel a return of the painful sensations she had of late experienced. It was when Mrs. Irwin casually inquired "if she was aware that there was a family of her name residing in Louisville?" A slight flush dyed her cheeks as she replied in the affirmative; for she remembered the insolent and unfeeling manner in which they had replied to her application; but Mrs. Irwin observing her emotion, immediately

changed the subject, and Lillian soon forgot her unnatural relatives.

As they rose from the table Mrs. Irwin wound her arm round Lillian's waist, and led the way to the cheerful and elegant drawing-room. "We are very unfashionable people you will find, Miss Lilla," remarked Mr. Irwin, as he lifted the youngest child to her accustomed position on his knee. "It is not our practice to deny our little ones any of the enjoyment and privileges of home by confining them to the nursery or school-room." Lillian had expected this from what she had already observed, and it but added to the high opinion she had already formed of this amiable family. After some time Mrs. Irwin, as was her custom every evening, played several simple airs on the piano for the children. The youngest pleaded for one more.

"Perhaps Miss Lillian will play for you," replied the fond parent. "Ask her, my love."

The little girl immediately went forward to Lillian, and with a modest grace begged her to play for herself and sisters just one tune; and Lillian, imprinting a kiss upon the fair child's brow, took her seat at the instrument. She played and sang several airs in a manner which charmed her youthful auditors; and at length little Ada impetuously exclaimed, "oh, Miss Lillian, I must kiss you for that sweet music before you play any more:" and she threw her little arms around her new friend in a close embrace. The parents exchanged pleased glances as they saw that the young governess had already won so much upon the affection of her pupils; but the father gently reproved their desire for more music, reminding them that it was more pleasant for them to listen than for Miss Lillian to play and sing, while she was still fatigued from travelling. With ready obedience the children desisted from their entreaties, and cheerfully began to amuse themselves with their childish sports.

With such parents, and children so well trained by judicious care and unwearied attention, our heroine had no cause to apprehend meeting with the vexations and annoyances generally attendant upon her position. The mornings only were spent in the school-room; for the Irwins were not of that class of parents who seek to force the intellect of their children without regard to their strength or capacity, from the foolish ambition of producing prodigies; the afternoons, therefore, were devoted to amusing occupation, walks or drives. Mr. Irwin's ample library was at all times open to Lillian, and by his advice she undertook a course of study for which hitherto she had had no oppor-

tunity. The gentleness and agreeable mode of teaching rendered her every day more dear to her amiable pupils, who endeavored by their assiduity and correct deportment to manifest their affection. Often would they express their delight in having such a dear, sweet governess; and the school-room, instead of being the dreary prison it generally seems to young and buoyant children, was to them a place of delightful resort, to which they never needed a second summons.

Mrs. Elsinger and her early friend did indeed pass many pleasant hours together; and in the comfort which now surrounded her, and in the consciousness of the happiness and well-being of her children, the widow felt amply compensated for the trial she had experienced in leaving her dear cottage-home for a new and untried scene.

CHAPTER IV.

"REALLY, this is too bad!" exclaimed Miss Albina Elsinger, as she entered the private parlor of her splendid abode, and threw herself angrily upon a velvet-cushioned tabouret, with the heavy gilt tassels of which she played nervously, while spite and vexation were legibly imprinted on every feature of her flushed countenance.

"What is the matter, my daughter?" inquired her portly papa.

"You remember, papa, those persons who wrote to us for assistance some time ago?"

"Perfectly: what of them now?"

"Why, Mrs. Irwin has engaged the girl as governess, and she and her mother are there, treated with every respect and attention, as I am told, riding out with Mrs. Irwin, and——"

"Who told you all this?" interrupted Mrs. Elsinger, incredulously.

"Emeline Spurrier, and Louisa Mayward. Oh, it is true, mamma—you need not doubt it: it is too true. I called at Mrs. Mayward's this morning, and had a long chat with Lou. Among other things, she asked me if I knew the governess Mrs. Irwin lately engaged. I told her I did not, and she then said that Emeline Spurrier, who, as you know, is very intimate at Irwin's, saw Mrs. Irwin at a concert a few nights ago, with a young lady whom she did not think she had ever seen before: but she concluded she must be one of Mrs. Irwin's nieces from Baltimore. The next morning, therefore, she called to see her. Mrs. Irwin was not at home; but she saw little Ada running through the hall, and asked her if any of her cousins was visiting there. The child replied no, and Emeline said she had

thought it was one of them she saw the night before with her parent. Ada said, 'oh, that was Miss Elsinger.' Emeline thought the child was mistaken, and inquired if she was certain that was the young lady's name. 'Oh, yes, Miss Lillian Elsinger is her name—is it not a pretty one? Would you like to see her?' inquired Ada. 'No, dear, not at present,' replied Emeline; 'is she a stranger on a visit to your mamma?' 'Her mother and she are here; they are going to stay with us always, and we are so glad: Miss Lillian is our governess, and we all love her so much!'

"Emeline said no more, but at her next visit to the Mayward's told all she had heard; and while Louisa was still speaking of it, Emeline herself came in, and repeated all that Louisa had said, adding, 'they are relatives of yours, Albina, I presume.' Such impertinence!" and the young lady paused in her narrative overcome with vexation.

"And what did you reply?" asked Mr. Elsinger, after a pause.

"Of course, I disclaimed all knowledge of them," replied his daughter, with a haughty toss of her head, as she rose to retire to her room. "But I do not think they believed me. Emeline merely said, that it was evident Mrs. Irwin thought a great deal of them, as she had seen them riding or walking with her two or three times, and the governess was certainly a beautiful girl."

"Mrs. Irwin must be in great want of company to go out so much with a young woman in her employ," remarked Mrs. Elsinger, with a sneer.

"It is an evidence of her vulgar taste," chimed in the indignant daughter. "I expect she came from a low family, after all. I am glad we do not visit there!" The young lady and her mother had made strenuous efforts to form an acquaintance with the Irwins, but had failed.

"I hope you did not express yourself thus to Emeline," remarked Mr. Elsinger, "for she as well as every one in Louisville is aware that an acquaintance with the Irwins is not to be despised. They are eccentric persons in many respects, but occupy a position which renders their whims allowable."

Yes, generosity and kindness are doubtless great "eccentricities" in the estimation of the world; but it is fortunate for the honor of human nature, that there are a few superior minds that can dare to practice such "eccentricities" in defiance of the restraints with which fashionable society would fetter each free, warm heart that moves within its sphere.

Albina Elsinger could not easily forget the shock her sensitive feelings had received. She even declared that she would go no more into company, lest she should meet with that impatient young person, who would, doubtless, greatly enjoy her mortification at such an event. Her father laughed at her nonsense, as he termed it, but she persisted most heroically in keeping her resolution for several weeks; obstinately refusing any invitation, until her mother feared that her darling's health would suffer from such close and unaccustomed seclusion.

But at length her resolution was put to flight by an invitation to a ball, which Madam G—— proposed giving in a style unequalled. It was generally understood that Lord Villers, a most accomplished young Englishman, and his particular friend, Mr. Myford, an American gentleman of high birth and immense wealth, would grace this festive scene with their distinguished presence; and the young lady rousing at once from the languor and listlessness into which she had fallen, overjoyed her parents by the announcement that she would be there also.

"Pa, I must have something for this ball superior to anything I have yet worn," was her concluding remark.

"Which of the gentlemen do you intend to captivate? eh, my daughter?"

"Oh, I may not like either; but I have a curiosity to see a live nobleman, and also his friend, whom, from what I hear, must be almost equally attractive, and I am determined," she added, haughtily, as she glanced at the large mirror that reflected her fine form, "to make an impression on both."

The father smiled, with a well satisfied air, as he glanced toward his equally gratified lady, placing in his daughter's hand at the same time, a roll of bank notes wherewith to commence preparations for an attack on the hearts of the "live nobleman and his almost equally attractive" friend. Sooth to say, he was in every respect pleased with her avowed determination. To obtain a suitable husband for his handsome and accomplished daughter had long been an object of his paternal solicitude; and the accounts he had heard of Mr. Myford's great wealth rendered him a very desirable person, in his estimation, for that honor. Of Lord Villers he knew not so much; but he was said to possess large estates in England, and his family name was an ancient and honorable one. Either of these gentlemen would make a most unexceptionable son-in-law; and Mr. Elsinger, as he observed how absorbed his daughter had become in preparations for the ball drew many flattering

anguries of her success; and as he sat dreamily over his champagne, visions of marriage settlements, bridal gifts, &c., would float pleasantly through his imagination.

The grand—the important night arrived. Albina Elsinger took a last survey of her radiant figure in her mirror, and with a self-complacent air tripped lightly down to the drawing room where her parents awaited her. Her dress was of rich white satin, over which a robe of transparent muslin, richly embroidered in silver, fell in light and graceful folds. Her redundant hair was confined by a comb studded with brilliants, and a garland of leaves formed of emeralds, encircled her head, and was fastened at one side by a cluster of diamond blossoms, glistening amid a spray of emeralds. Necklace, bracelets and brooch of the same costly gems completed her adornments, and flashed brilliantly with unchanging lustre, as she moved gracefully forward. Her splendid attire, which, after much hesitation and debate she had selected as the style approaching nearest to her luxuriant taste, accorded well with her showy style of beauty, and displayed it to the greatest advantage; and her proud father, as he seated himself opposite to her in the carriage, congratulated her on her superb toilet, and the sensation she would not fail to create. Albina did not reply, for her thoughts were too much engrossed by her anticipated triumph to allow her to converse; but a smile of proud, exultant joy played around her beautiful mouth, as she leaned back in the rich cushions, and was driven rapidly to the scene of conquest.

Had she known that Mrs. Irwin would likewise appear at this assemblage with the *governess*, her poor, and dependant cousin, doubtless the young lady would have been deprived of much of her self-complacency and satisfaction; but of this happily she was ignorant, so that no vexatious thought disturbed the serenity of her mind, nor overshadowed her brilliant countenance. Mrs. Irwin, in truth, had had no little difficulty in persuading her young protegee to attend this grand ball, for Lillian, timid and sensitive, shrank from obtruding her presence in a company where it might not be desired; and, moreover, her retiring disposition and the quiet seclusion in which she had always lived, rendered her averse to scenes of fashionable amusement. But her friend would take no excuse, nor listen to any pleading or expostulation on the subject; and accordingly, at about the same time that the gay young cousin left her splendid home, buoyed up with anticipated conquests, Lillian Elsinger took her seat in Mr. Irwin's carriage, to make her

first appearance in fashionable society. Her attire was a marked contrast to Albina's. She was dressed in an embroidered mull muslin, fitting well her slight, but beautifully rounded form; her soft hair was smoothly braided, and garlanded with a wreath of autumn leaves; she wore no ornament, save a bracelet of pearls, a gift from Mrs. Irwin, encircling one fair, white arm. Yet she looked so lovely in her simple dress that her kind friend looked upon her with a smile of almost maternal satisfaction, and could but think that a more elaborate toilet would destroy the effect of her gentle, winning beauty.

The gorgeous rooms of Madam G—— were filled with a gay and splendid company. There was an unusual display of rich ornaments and dresses, for more than one secretly hoped to gain the admiring gaze of Lord Villers or his friend, scarcely less coveted, though unfortunately lacking a *title*. But amongst the crowd Albina Elsinger moved pre-eminent. Many a heart swelled with envy as the buzz of admiration everywhere followed her footsteps; and when at length she stood in the circle of dancers with no less a personage than Mr. Myford, envy was at its height; for, of course, she would through him, be introduced to his lordship, whose eye had more than once glanced admiringly toward her. Albina herself seemed of the same opinion with her rivals; she went the giddy round with a cheek brightly flushed with pride, and a flashing of her large, dark eyes, and ere the next set was formed, was engaged by the nobleman! But, alas! at the moment of her triumph, the cup of happiness and gratified pride which she had begun to taste, was rudely dashed to the earth. Emeline Spurrier, who, as one of the disappointed rivals, might have had a secret motive for the act, leaned toward her, and drew her attention to a young lady at some distance. "She in the plain dress and garland of leaves?"

"Yes, that is the one. Well, she is the Miss Elsinger of whom I spoke to you. Is she not very beautiful?"

Albina was too vexed to reply; but she regarded Lillian for an instant intently, and, notwithstanding the simplicity of her costume, she trembled lest she should bear away the prize for which she had so magnificently arrayed herself. She saw Lord Villers gazing earnestly upon her, and now he remarked that he had wondered who was the young lady whose dress was so tasteful though so simple; and the tone of his voice betrayed an interest in the unconscious Lillian which filled his partner with uneasiness. She looked down, and pretended to be engaged with

the clasp of her bracelet, to hide the angry feelings which she could not at once subdue; nor did they entirely vanish during the dance, for she again saw the governess and with her no other than—Mr. Myford.

When Lord Villers led her to a seat, Albina complained of unusual languor, which she thought might serve the double purpose of explaining the change in her demeanor, and of keeping him at her side. As on account of his title she greatly preferred him to the other guests of the evening, she now put forth all her powers to interest and amuse him, nor did she fail to listen with real or pretended rapture to the accounts his lordship gave of foreign scenes, presentations at court, &c. Once or twice, a well-applied, though delicate and refined compliment caused her heart to bound with happier feelings; and, at last, when describing the gorgeous magnificence of the drawing-room held by the queen immediately preceding his departure from England, he whispered, "pardon me, but you, I think, are one more fitted to adorn such a courtly scene than this!" the eloquent blood tinged her fair cheek, and her radiant eyes for a moment met his proudly, then drooped beneath the long, earnest gaze which he bent upon her. But as her appearance was more in unison with the assemblies of titled ladies he had been describing, than became a daughter of republican America, and as she had more than once expressed a decided preference for most of the customs of his ancient land over her own, it may be doubted whether his words had no other meaning than that which her vanity inferred. Soon after, another gentleman approached, and his lordship, with a graceful bow, moved forward to a group of ladies of whom Lillian Elsinger was the centre; and his late partner, with a new feeling of envious vexation beheld him introduced to her. In the course of the evening Mr. Myford again found himself beside Albina.

"That is a very beautiful young lady," he remarked, as his eyes fell upon Lillian, who was conversing with a graceful animation with his friend. "She is a relative of yours, I presume, Miss Elsinger?"

"No," was the hasty, and perhaps, not very courteously toned answer. "No; there is no relationship."

"Indeed; I had thought you were relations. She is certainly exceedingly lovely and intelligent. The charming simplicity of her dress corresponds so well with her manners."

This was too much. Albina's face again flushed with anger; was she to be continually tormented by enconiums on the plain, simple

appearance of her timid, graceful cousin? Unable to repress, altogether, the spiteful feelings which her provoking companion aroused, she said, hastily,

"It is probable that a poor girl as she is could not afford a dress more in accordance with the elegant scene into which Mrs. Irwin has foolishly introduced her."

"Is she then poor?"

"So I have heard. At least she is governess to Mrs. Irwin's children, and she would scarcely be that if not necessitated, you know."

"No; certainly not. Yet she seems not unused to fashionable society; and she is certainly well calculated to adorn it. And you say you are not related? The similarity of names led me into error."

"Yes; they are of the same name, but of a different family."

"I fancied, also, that there was a marked resemblance between you. She is really a beautiful girl."

Albina made no reply, and her companion changed the subject, to a more agreeable one. But the night was fated to be a trying one to the proud beauty. In animated conversation with Mr. Myford, she had forgotten her vexations, and recovered her usual flow of spirit; and had soon afterward withdrawn to the embrasure of a large window, where concealed by the rich, velvet drapery she glistened gaily with Emeline Spurrier, who had sought the same retreat to rest for a few moments; and they were about emerging again into the light and gay bustle of the scene when Lord Villers and his friend drew near, engaged in seemingly earnest conversation. The young ladies drew back within the friendly shelter of the curtain, where they listened anxiously, each with the secret hope of hearing something that would minister to her own vanity.

"But are you sure that your information is correct?" were the first words they could distinguish. It was Mr. Myford who spoke.

"I am," was the reply. "I gained a few moments' private conversation with Mrs. Irwin just now, and learned that my surmises were perfectly correct—that her friend is indeed my step-sister, and consequently her sweet daughter is my niece. Something attracted me to her as soon as I beheld her, and when I heard her name I felt confident that she was one of those I sought. My showy-looking partner is doubtless another; though in her I do not feel so much interested."

"No! There is no relationship," interrupted Mr. Myford,

"There is not! How do you know?"

"From your 'showy-looking partner's' own fair lips. She assured me there is no relationship between them. Merely a similarity of names."

"Ah! I understand. Poor relations always belong to another family—well, in that case Miss Albina cannot claim kindred with *me*, which she would, perhaps, be willing to do, in her republican fondness for titles." And with a laugh full of mirth the young men passed on.

How felt Albina during this conversation? It were vain to endeavor to depict her feelings; anger, envy, and mortification struggling within her; while the thought that Emeline had also heard all, and would quickly promulgate it among their friends was positively maddening. That young lady, however, was too well occupied with her own schemes to observe her mortified companion at this time. She remembered that she had spoken admiringly of Lillian Elsinger in Lord Villers' hearing; and she trusted that this would leave a favorable impression on his lordship's mind, and, perhaps, contribute to secure for her his particular regard. With this view she resolved to say nothing of the over-heard conversation, but to evince a decided attachment to the young governess ere the fact of her distinguished relationship would be generally known. She was partly disappointed in her expectations on finding when she again joined the brilliant throng that the nobleman had taken his leave; but she danced often with Mr. Myford, to whom she found an opportunity of speaking in rapturous terms of Lillian, nothing doubting that her warm praise would be repeated to the uncle. When the dance was concluded, Emeline suddenly recollected that she had as yet only bowed from a distance to her highly esteemed friend, Mrs. Irwin, and expressed a desire to have a chat with her; Mr. Myford, of course, readily escorted her to that lady, who returned her animated salutation with much kindness; and introduced her to Lillian, who was at that moment beside her. There was no fashionable formality in Emeline's acknowledgment of the introduction, and both ladies were rather surprised when she began a conversation with Lillian with the warmth of an old acquaintance. They could not suspect the secret motive which prompted her; though it was true that on first seeing Lillian she had admired her. When Mrs. Irwin soon after rose to retire from the gay assemblage, Emeline kissed the young governess affectionately, expressing a desire for an intimate friendship, to which she having gracefully responded, followed her friend from the room. Mr. Myford attended them to the carriage, and returned to the company, but

it was soon evident that it had lost its charms for him, and as soon as possible he also withdrew.

Meanwhile Albina Elsinger, resolutely concealing her mortified feelings under a counterfeited gaiety, danced with a gentleman of considerable pretensions to wealth and importance, who had long been an admirer of her beauty, and on this occasion quite captivated by her brilliancy, became her most assiduous attendant. So long as she had entertained hopes of making a more distinguished conquest, her manner to Edmund Spencer was careless and indifferent; but now, finding all her anticipations dashed to the earth, she received with animation the attentions which he obsequiously renewed. Flattered by this change in her demeanor, which he interpreted to suit his own views, young Spencer deemed his triumph complete, and put forth all his powers of pleasing to continue the favorable impression he imagined he had made upon the belle; but the conflict with her secret feelings was too arduous to be long concealed, and she felt relieved beyond measure when she again found herself within the carriage where she could give vent to passionate weeping. The surprise and chagrin of Mr. and Mrs. Elsinger, when at length they were made, through impetuous exclamations and violent sobs, acquainted with the existing state of affairs, was extreme; but alas! what could anger and indignation avail now? They felt the evil irremediable; and the night which had been anticipated as one of proud triumph, saw them overwhelmed with mortification and shame.

CHAPTER V.

At an early hour on the following morning Lord Villers made his appearance at the mansion of Mrs. Irwin; and by that lady's desire was shown immediately to her private parlor, where his interview with his newly-discovered relatives would be secure from intrusion. He was soon engaged in earnest conversation with Mrs. Elsinger, while Mrs. Irwin, who, at her friend's request, remained, and Lillian were silent, but deeply interested auditors. The minute details of that conversation, so absorbingly interesting to the parties concerned, would probably prove tedious to our readers. It will suffice, for our purpose, that during the course of it Lord Villers succeeded in establishing his identity with the step-brother of Mrs. Elsinger, who, with his mother, had disappeared immediately after his father's decease; since which time nothing had been heard of their movements. It could only be conjectured that the widow, who was of Eng-

lish parentage, had gone to the mother country: and such was indeed the fact. Not long after she became the wife of a nobleman who had taken a singular fancy to little Adolphus, whom he now formally adopted as his son and heir to his title and vast possessions.

Surrounded by all the pageantry and splendor of a proud and ancient house; educated at one of England's far-famed Universities, where homage and adulation were paid to his high rank; the youth still grew up in taste and feeling a most inveterate republican, and carefully cherished the faint memories of his childhood's home. And when, on arriving at manhood, he found himself by the recent will of his adopted father possessed of vast wealth, his first desire was to visit the land of his birth, and make inquiries concerning his connexions, about whom he was the more anxious from some indistinct recollections of his parent's sudden departure from America, and the rigid silence she ever maintained respecting the family of her first husband.

The mystery, however, was now to be unfolded; for on acquainting his mother with his desire, she yielded a ready assent; and filled up the rude outlines of the picture which memory had faithfully treasured, by the full particulars of his father's history. She did not even conceal the reason of her secret removal to England; but, on the contrary, proposed as a special motive for his intended journey, the restoration of that portion of his father's property which justly belonged to his half-sister: the want of which she might, perhaps, have experienced, as her husband's profession was a precarious one, and there had been a rumor that he was shipwrecked.

The youth listened with astonishment to these details; but he repressed the expression of his indignant feelings through respect for his mother, who, now that the subject had been broached, evinced the liveliest remorse for her conduct, pleading only her maternal anxiety for her son's prosperity in palliation. That son—how could he upbraid her, greatly as his innate sense of justice and honor revolted against the course she had pursued?

It only remained for him to expedite his departure; and his mother quickly relieved his reluctance to leave her, by unfolding her own purposes. She was not, as may be imagined, a disconsolate widow. Pride and a desire for her son's aggrandizement had been the motives for her union with her deceased lord: and now, having remained the requisite period in strict seclusion, she wished to join a party of friends on a continental tour. Her son gladly availed himself of her permission to spend the same time

on his travels; and as early as possible departed in company with young Myford, whose acquaintance he had made some time before. The gentlemen became warmly attached during the voyage, and Lord Villers finding that his relatives had removed from his native city of Baltimore, willingly accompanied his friend through the route of travel he had planned; and it was thus that they at length reached Louisville, where he so unexpectedly encountered one of the objects of his search.

Such were the principal points of the narration which the young nobleman now gave his attentive listeners. To Lillian it all seemed but as a dream. She had never heard of her grandfather's second marriage: for her mother had ever avoided the most distant allusion to one who had so cruelly wronged her, and whose name could awaken, therefore, none but unpleasant memories. But when the stranger claiming a kindred tie which she could not believe existed, produced a miniature of his father, which Mrs. Elsinger at once recognized as the likeness of her own dear parent—the truth became clear to the daughter's mind; and while she mingled her own tears with her mother's over the semblance of the venerated dead, she silently rejoiced that she had never known the circumstances which would have caused her to think only with painful feelings of those so closely connected with her.

While they all sat thus recalling by-gone years, a servant entered with Mr. Myford's card. Mrs. Irwin, finding that he was acquainted with the happy discovery his friend had made, ordered him to be shown into the friendly circle, where he was cordially welcomed. Animated conversation followed, though sustained chiefly, it must be confessed, by the two elder ladies and Lord Villers; for Mr. Myford seemed strangely absent-minded as he sat opposite to Lillian, who kept her eyes intently fixed on her grandfather's likeness, which she held in her hand; save when she raised her long lashes somewhat timidly to reply to any observation directly addressed to her by her gay young uncle, who continued to talk in a gay strain, though he sometimes glanced with smiling significance from his fair niece to his friend, which glances they at length observing. Lillian's brow was at once suffused by a soft blush; while Myford, with a sort of confused consciousness, made an effort to rally from his abstracted mood.

"But how is it, my fair niece," observed Lord Villers, "that you are so unmoved by these disclosures? Few young ladies, I fancy, would hear with such quiet composure of the wealth to which they had unexpectedly fallen heir."

"Indeed, sir," replied the young girl, earnestly, "for myself I do not desire such good fortune. I rejoice sincerely on my dear mother's account; and yet more for my brother, who will now be spared the trials of a life of poverty and toil. But as regards myself since I have been an inmate of Mrs. Irwin's hospitable house, I have not a wish ungratified."

"And I," said Mrs. Irwin, "have often reproached myself to-day with selfishness; for the announcement of that which should cause me only pleasurable emotion, has given me more than one pang, as I think of the effect it will have upon my own home. But I shall conquer my ungenerous regrets ere long, and rejoice with my whole heart at the events which will enable my sweet Lillian to take her proper position in society. For it needs but little intercourse with the world to learn that wealth has peculiar charms; and there are those who cannot estimate virtue, talent, beauty, nor grace without this talismanic accompaniment."

"Are you aware, Adolphus," asked Mrs. Elsinger, "that there are other relations of yours residing in Louisville?"

"Ah, yes, my dear sister," replied the young man, with a smile, "I met them last night for the first time—probably the last also."

"How so?" asked his sister, in surprise.

Again the nobleman smiled. "Your remarks, my dear madam," said he, addressing Mrs. Irwin, "will probably apply with singular appropriateness in that quarter. Lillian will no doubt become suddenly exalted in their estimation; but I hope, my dear girl, you have too much innate dignity to feel flattered."

"I scarcely think such will be the case," she replied, remembering the letter of which her uncle as yet knew nothing. "But surely my dear uncle would not wish me to be unforgiving and——"

"Indeed I should," interrupted Lord Villers, warmly. "I would not have you duped by the hollow profession of those who will now flatter and fawn upon you, merely because you are an heiress. My remarks do not apply merely to relatives—there are others to whom they will be equally appropriate. Forgive them as freely as you please—they are unworthy your resentment as your favor; and remember always we are not obliged from the fear of being vindictive, to exhibit a hypocritical display of friendliness which we cannot feel toward such people."

"And remember too, Miss Elsinger," murmured Myford, who now took a seat near her on the plea of examining more closely the miniature, "that there are some, one at least who yielded to

your charms the homage and devotion they deserve, and in whose estimation the wealth of the Indies could not enhance their value." The varying cheek on which his eyes bent so earnestly, yet so respectfully, showed that his words had touched an answering chord, but her embarrassment was quickly relieved by his considerably taking the miniature, and remarking to his friend upon the marked resemblance between it and Mrs. Elsinger.

From that day the two young men were frequent visitors to Mr. Irwin's; and what marvel that Lillian and her admirer soon discovered the similarity of their tastes and sentiments, and that the impression which each had made at first meeting daily strengthened into mutual love? Lord Villers with his usual impetuosity relieved his friend of the embarrassment of a formal declaration, and insisted that the wedding should be given prior to his departure from America.

Early in September, therefore, Mrs. Irwin's drawing-rooms were thrown open to the largest and gayest company that had ever there assembled; and Lillian Elsinger, with her heart brimming over with trusting happiness, gave her hand to him who had won her first affections. The bridal party made the tour of the Lakes, and returned to their homes in safety, their felicity dampened only by the pain of parting with Lord Villers, who had made himself a favorite with all.

And now a few words on one or two other persons connected with our story. Emeline Spurrier finding her hopes of Lord Villers futile, consoled herself by repeating to all she knew the conversation which she had overheard on the night of Mrs. G——'s grand ball. Of course repeated eagerly by each new hearer, ere long it came to the ears of Mr. Edmund Spencer, who encouraged by the sweet smiles of Miss Albina since that eventful night, was on the eve of an avowal, which she impatiently awaited as a refutation of the whispers she knew were circulating regarding her disappointed aims. The report of her duplicity, nay, even her falsehoods, startled Mr. Spencer. Though somewhat foppish in his dress and manners, he abhorred dissimulation sincerely, and having procured indubitable proofs of the truth of the rumors concerning his lady-love, all his admiration and love in a moment vanished. Albina, conscious of the cause of the abrupt termination of his attentions, went on a visit to some friends at a distance, where she finally made a conquest as unlike as could be imagined to her former beau ideal—while her friend Emeline, foiled also in her ambitious views, is still looking about for one to replace, in her admiration, the "titled foreigner."

THE MORTGAGOR'S DAUGHTER.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "THE VALLEY FARM," "DORA ATHERTON," &C.

[Entered, according to the Act of Congress, in the year 1853, by Charles J. Peterson, as the proprietor, in the Clerk's Office, of the District Court of the U. S., in the Eastern District of Pennsylvania.]

I.—THE FARM KITCHEN.

It was a wild evening in winter. The wind blew fitfully without, now shrieking around the old farm-house as if in rage at being excluded, and now moaning away over the cold, bare fields like orphan children wringing their hands and weeping in despair. The huge buttonwoods in the front yard, which had shaded the roof for fifty summers, tossed their skeleton arms, and swayed, creaking in the gale, powerless to shelter it; while through the small green panes of the kitchen window, the low and leaden colored clouds were seen driving by, ominous of a night of storm, and suggesting thoughts of travellers belated, and perhaps frozen to death.

But within all was ruddy and warm. Old Mr. Forester had just returned from the barn-yard, drawn up the great arm-chair, and giving the green worsted cushion an abstracted shake, seated himself before the blazing hickory fire, which crackled and sparkled up the huge chimney. Though age had now bent his frame, and wrinkled his features, the farmer was still what would be considered a fine-looking man, especially for his years. His height had once been over six feet, and his person large in proportion; but his flesh, within a year or two, had begun to shrink away; and his friends had noticed other signs of an approaching breaking up in his health. His step, though yet comparatively firm, occasionally faltered; his eye was no longer as bright as formerly; and it was observed that his hand shook when, in discharge of his duty as an elder of the church, he handed around the plate at communion. The contour of his face was Roman, which, as he now sat thoughtfully gazing at the fire, gave him a severe aspect, which was far from being in unison with his character; for a kinder neighbor, or more humane man could not be found in the whole neighborhood: indeed it was a common saying that Squire Forester had a heart as soft as a woman's.

For a while the old man watched the fire in silence, as the red coals fell with a tinkling sound, or a stick burned in two and dropped, with a puff of smoke. The ruddy light, meantime, danced on the white-washed walls, making the far end

of the room almost as bright as day, but leaving the corners right and left of the fire-place in comparative gloom. The rows of brilliant tins, which hung on the wall opposite to the chimney, shone like polished silver. Here and there in this glittering array were stuck sprigs of holly, the prickly leaf of which glistened among the muffin-rings, cullenders, dredge-boxes, and cake-pans, which were scoured regularly every Friday, though they were never used, as another collection, only less radiant, in the cellar-way could testify. Under the tins stood a blue painted dough-trough, with its snowy top as white as sand and labor could make it; and on this was laid a large loaf of bread, covered up in a spotless old table-cloth. Somewhat to the left of the direct line of light, and therefore partially in shadow, there depended from the low white ceiling, on short hooks, a tempting display of fine embrowned hams, dried beef, and tongues; while in the comparative darkness that brooded, closer in toward the wall, a bundle of semi-transparent inflated bladders dimly appeared: and under these, though a little more in the direction of the fire-place, was seen the door leading out into the wash-house, with a white linen towel hanging from a roller. On the right side of the room, and almost opposite this door was the old-fashioned looking-glass, between two windows, with a bunch of peacock-feathers arranged above it. Some half dozen ears of remarkably fine corn, with several strings of small red peppers ornamented the wall nearer the chimney. On the high wooden mantel three or four brass candle sticks, a few warped and dog-eared books, and a boot-jack mounted guard.

The kitchen was divided into two parts; one of which, about the fire-place, was paved with brick, that was kept of the most brilliant red; but the other, and by far the larger portion, was floored with boards, and covered with a substantial home-made carpet. On the latter the table, painted red, was set, and its white cloth spread for tea. Plates were laid for two; and tempting golden butter, spongy bread, a stand of crisp-looking pickles, some rich cheese, and the invariable plate of apple-butter already graced it.

The tea-kettle, with its delicate blue steam puffing from the spout, now began to hum busily, as it hung from the trammel, and to rouse old Mr. Forester from his reverie: a task in which it was assisted by the savory smell of a couple of slices of ham, which his daughter had been cooking unobserved until now. The father looked up, sighed, and began to watch, with a mournful eye, the tall, graceful figure of his child moving about the room, as she successively skimmed the cream from the huge earthen pan of milk, turned the ham on the grid-iron, and put the tea to draw in the little Britannia pot. Something was plainly on his mind, and that of a character unusually painful, since not even this sweet, household spectacle could chase away his sad look. Yet care should have fled, at once, in the presence of Julia Forester. She was now about nineteen, with the witchery of girlhood still seen in her buoyant step, but the light of womanhood's mystic revelations already dawning in her face. Not every one would have called that face beautiful. But to others the large, dark, serious eyes; the firm expression of the dilated nostril; and the gentle beauty of the mouth, indicated qualities awakening love and respect alike, and rarely found in union. It was a countenance that, once seen, lived in the memory of the few forever, as a type of the highest moral beauty.

When she had transferred the broiled ham to its appropriate dish, lit the candles, placed the little tea-pot on the table, and set the chairs, she untied the checked apron which she had worn to protect her silk one, and said,

"Now, father, tea is ready."

The old man rose, and placing himself opposite to her, gazed a moment on the board, then reverently lifting his right hand, asked a blessing. There was now a silent pause, when Julia began to pour out the tea, saying,

"Ain't you well, to-night, father? You seem so dull."

"No, I'm quite well, my dear. Will you take a bit of ham?"

But, in opposition to his usual custom, he soon became absent, and often sighed unconsciously. Julia tried, with remarks about the weather, and questions about the farm, to recall his wandering thoughts, but without success. At last she said again, and with an anxious look,

"I'm really afraid, dear father, that you are not well."

He answered with a faint attempt to smile.

"Indeed, my child, I am as well as usual. When one grows old I suppose one becomes less talkative."

She sighed, and replied,

"Oh! father, don't try to deceive me. You have not been like yourself since you returned from the village yesterday. Either you are sick, or something is on your mind. Why won't you tell me?"

She looked at him as she spoke, with so much love in her earnest eyes, that his glance fell before her's: and changing the subject, he said, "I'm glad I had that sheep-pen mended, for we shall likely have another snow-to-night. I heard yesterday that the mountains are several feet deep already."

"Ah!" she answered, "these severe winters—God help the poor!"

"Yes! God help them," replied her father, as if involuntarily, and he sighed profoundly, and again sank into abstraction.

Julia watched him in silence for some moments. He did not ask for his customary second cup of tea, and the food on his plate remained almost untasted. She knew, by these signs, that he was sorely troubled about something. Finally she could bear it no longer. Rising, she stole around to his chair, and putting one arm around his neck, began fondly to stroke his thin, grey hairs.

"Dear father, you must tell me," she said. "What is it ails you?"

He turned away his face, so as to conceal his emotion, and answered huskily,

"It's nothing, Julia. At least nothing but what, I hope, a few days will mend."

"But, in the meantime," she continued, coaxingly, "tell me what it is. I can't be happy, dear father, if I don't know."

He moved uneasily on his chair, as if he would have escaped her importunity if he could, saying,

"It's only a little matter of business, which you could not understand, my child."

"Father," she said, earnestly, "this doesn't satisfy me. You have never had any business affairs to produce this effect on you before. It is something serious, I know."

"Yes, yes, Julia," he said, half impatiently, "it is of more importance, perhaps, than usual; but still I think a few days will remove it."

"If a few days will remove it, dear father, it cannot make me unhappy in the meantime: but while it renders you so wretched, I ought to know it and share it with you."

As she spoke a warm tear fell on the old man's forehead. He looked suddenly up, and while her eyes overflowed, she resumed brokenly,

"Oh! do tell me, father. You have no one now but me."

He could resist no longer. Taking her hand, and fondling it between his own, while he looked tenderly up into her face, he said,

"I will tell you, Julia. I had hoped you would not ask, for if trouble is to come, you will to have to meet it soon enough."

"But you have always taught me, dear father, that it is best to be prepared for whatever threatens; and that it is neither brave, nor Christian to fly from difficulties."

The old man gave her a glance full of fond affection, and answered, with emotion,

"Ah! my daughter, I have learned, at last, that it is easier to say what we ought to do, than to do it when the day of trial comes. But God give us strength, me especially, sinner that I am to doubt his goodness——"

He paused a moment, and then resumed,

"Perhaps, my child, we shall have to leave this place. I had hoped to die here, where your mother died, and your brother; and to lay my head in the old grave-yard beside them; but it is not to be, I fear. I had hoped also that, when I left, you would have had these acres for your own, but neither is this to be. The mortgage, which has been so long on the farm, is now due, and the holder says he must sue it out, unless I can pay the money, which is impossible. We are beggars, therefore."

Julia listened in dismay. She had known, ever since she grew up, that there was a mortgage on the farm; but that was all; and she had supposed that it was to a small amount, and involved no danger. Her own education had been liberal, even expensive, as if she was to be something of an heiress; and indeed in that light she had regarded herself, until quite lately. But within the last few months, she had noticed occasional evidences of pecuniary embarrassment on the part of her father, which had caused her many a regret, and led her to exercise the strictest personal and household economy. She had supposed, however, that the difficulty was only temporary, for she heard everybody complaining of hard times, and she concluded that, in a year or so, the embarrassment would pass away. To be told, therefore, that they were beggars startled her. But she thought not of herself: it was for her father she trembled.

"It has been a ruin long preparing," resumed Mr. Forester, "yet it has burst on me, at last, unexpectedly. More than fifteen years ago, I bought fifty acres—that bit of meadow, you know—from the Norton estate, and, as I had no money, gave a mortgage on the farm. It was a foolish act, as I had no real necessity for the land; but the money was offered to me unsolicited, and even forced upon me; and so, in an evil hour, I was tempted into the purchase, fully believing that, before many years, I should be

able to discharge the debt. But first there came bad summers, which scarcely ever yielded more than half a crop; and then other things interfered," here his voice faltered, and Julia knew he referred to her mother's death, "so that, instead of reducing the principle, I was often without means to discharge the interest."

"Dear father," said the daughter, kissing him fondly, "yours has, indeed, been a hard lot."

"Not harder than my heavenly Master's, when on earth," said the old man, "though harder, perhaps, than that of many of my neighbors. But," he added, after a pause, "I must finish my story. Your dear mother's death, Julia, left me not only without a counsellor and friend, which she had ever truly been, but without any one to look after a woman's part on the farm: and the farmer, who is without aid in this department, has but little chance of getting out of debt. I kept up a brave heart, however; worked hard; and hoped in the future. My creditor too was easy, or at least I considered him such then. For when I had no money he trusted me, and thus my fears were lulled to sleep. Ah! this facility of getting into debt."

He spoke, as if abstractedly, and it was a full minute before he resumed.

"Then your poor brother's health, as even you may remember, began to fail. The work of the farm proved too severe for him, and as he had talent and ambition, I resolved to make every sacrifice I could, in order that he might be a lawyer. Your mother, my dear, died when you were so young that you can scarcely remember her; but your brother was your playmate; you know what we lost in him. To die, too, when he did; just when he had completed his studies; when we were all so proud of him——"

Here the speaker's voice broke down, and tears rolled over his cheeks. Julia also was weeping. For, like her father, her very being had been bound up in that adored brother, whose death had ravished from them so unexpectedly and so lately.

"Had James lived," resumed Mr. Forester, when he had gathered strength to proceed, "these latter troubles would not have fallen on me; for he would soon have been able to repay me, fourfold, for all I had done for him. It was this knowledge which made me indifferent to the debt which, year after year, accumulated on my farm. I believed I was only borrowing money, on the old place, for a few years, till he and you should be educated; and while he lived, therefore, it gave me no concern. But when he was so suddenly cut off, and I began to see how frightfully large the mortgage had become, with

no prospect of my ever reducing it except out of the earnings of the place, my heart sank at the prospect. I trembled for the day when they should carry me out in my coffin, and you would find yourself alone, with but a comparative pittance—"

"Oh! father," interrupted Julia, pressing his hand, "why did you worry about me. It is for yourself only you should be concerned."

The old man shook his head, and gazed mournfully at his daughter, but made no direct answer. At last he resumed.

"These hard times have, however, brought things to a crisis I little expected. Even our rich men begin now to want money, and the friend to whom I mortgaged my farm tells me that if I cannot pay, he shall be compelled to sell it. I have but one resource, and that is to get some other person to advance the sum, which, I suppose, is impossible. But I shall know certainly, in a day or two."

"Who lent you the money?" said Julia.

"Didn't I tell you? I thought I did. It was Mr. Owens."

She sighed. "He is our richest man, isn't he?" she said.

"He is, and, as I see you think, there is no hope elsewhere, if he cannot give us grace."

Julia was thoughtful for a moment. At last she resumed.

"But won't the farm, even if sold, leave something?"

"Nothing, I fear. It is a very large mortgage. In good times, indeed, the place would bring twice the amount; but not now." And the old man, seeing his daughter look still unsatisfied, mentioned the sum for which the farm was pledged.

"I don't know much about business," said Julia, in surprise, "but it seems to me, father, that the sum has grown out of all proportion to the original one, and to the expenses of our education."

"Ah! my child, capitalists, like Mr. Owens, don't give grace for nothing to their debtors, as you would know if you were a little less ignorant of the world. I told you that, often, I could not pay the interest. When this happened, I had of course to give my creditor an acknowledgment of it; and his way of doing business was to take a new mortgage with that amount added; for, without this, he would lose the interest on this unpaid interest, as he said, and I could not deny. In this way it did not take long to double the debt."

"But was this right?"

"It's the only way Mr. Owens lends his money,

whether right or wrong; and a good many others take the same plan. But I had no choice, except to yield to his terms, or repay the whole sum lent, which I was never able to do."

"It seems to me extortionate," cried Julia, indignantly. "Why, according to this, he holds a mortgage for three times as much as he has actually lent."

Old Mr. Forester made no answer. In his heart he began to view the transaction in the same light with Julia; but he was a man of unbounded charity; and, as he still feared, at times, that he might be unjust to his creditor, he said nothing.

At last the daughter, taking her father's face between her hands, kissed him fervently several times, and said, cheerfully,

"There, don't mind it any more, father; but go to bed, and take a good sleep; for I feel that all will yet be right, and that we will live here these many years. I have been thinking of something, which can't fail; but you mustn't look so curiously," she continued, playfully, "for I intend to keep you in suspense, as you have kept me. By this time, to-morrow, I will be able, I hope, to tell you that you needn't fear having this dear old place sold."

The father shook his head. He suspected that Julia's plan was to go, in person, and endeavor to borrow the money; and though he knew the energy of her character, and felt assured that she would succeed, if success was possible, he could not derive much consolation from the scheme, for he had himself already tried every feasible channel in vain. Nevertheless, when Julia assured him, and re-assured him that she was certain of bringing him good news, he began to think that she had, perhaps, some positive grounds for speaking thus; and gradually he permitted himself to be won over to something like hope.

When, before retiring, the usual family devotions were held, the fervor with which the grey-haired elder poured out his soul to the Father above, was heightened by feelings of gratitude, that He had vouchsafed such a daughter to be the staff and support of his old age.

And lying in bed afterward, he remained awake till nearly midnight, blessing God for this great treasure, while the wind went wailing by the house, like a childless old man, as he fancied more than once, weeping and lost, and wandering in the storm.

II.—THE CREDITOR.

JULIA also lay awake till late into the night. She had formed the resolution, while her father

had been speaking, of going personally to the creditor, believing, with the buoyant hope of youth, and with her sex's generous confidence in human goodness, that, when the fatal consequences of a sale were made fully known to Mr. Owens, he would consent to wait for his money. The scheme once conceived, Julia had persuaded herself in the excitement of the moment, that it was sure of success. "Surely, surely," she had said "he cannot dream how utterly he would ruin us, if he pressed things now. He is an old man himself, and has known father for half a century; if he has not a heart of stone he will wait till better times, at least."

But when Julia found herself alone, and began to examine, more dispassionately, the foundations for her hope, her assurance of success became fainter and fainter. Though as yet inexperienced in the ways of the world, she possessed sterling sense, so that when she reflected on Mr. Owens' conduct in the transaction; his demanding compound interest, and enforcing his claim at this period of general distress; a suspicion arose in her mind that he was acting deliberately. If this was so she knew there was no hope. In vain she tried to recover her sanguine feelings. For hours she lay awake, but the more she considered the subject, the more visionary appeared her late expectations.

She awoke unrefreshed, and with a violent head-ache, but anxious that her father should not see her looking jaded, she bathed her face copiously in cold water, and descended to breakfast. During the meal she exerted all her powers to appear cheerful, and succeeded to such an extent that her father's care-worn look disappeared partially.

The gale had blown itself out, during the night, without producing snow; and the sky was now of that brilliant blue only seen in winter. The sun shone with dazzling brightness. Through the keen north-west atmosphere, the smoke from the neighboring farm-houses ascended in graceful columns. The fields were alive with crows. Clear and musical across the distance came the sound of the academy bell, as it rung the children of the village to school.

As the distance was only about a mile, Julia determined to walk, and accordingly, as soon as the breakfast things were washed and put away, she set out for the village. No costly furs, as in the case of city belles, enveloped her person. But that tall and graceful figure did not require such luxuries to beautify it, while the robust exercise she took, and the bracing air she breathed, enabled her almost to defy cold. Her attire, however, though economical, was elegant.

As she tripped along the elevated foot-walk, at the side of the highway, more than one passing stranger turned to catch another glimpse, if possible, of that rosy face and those large, dark eyes.

The exhilarating atmosphere, and the loveliness of the winter scenery had, in part, restored confidence to Julia, during her walk: but when she entered the long village street, and saw the store of Mr. Owens ahead, her heart began to fail her again. Alas! had she known but half the truth about her father's creditor, she would never have ventured, brave though she was, to have proceeded with her errand.

Mr. Owens had come to the village, in early life, a poor boy. He had, at first, run errands for the principal store-keeper; had finally become a clerk in the establishment; and eventually, after years of economy and industry, had been enabled to buy out his employer. Once in business for himself, his shrewdness, energy, and careful habits had led rapidly to a fortune. He had married, just before he succeeded his old patron, and as the portion of his wife had materially assisted him to compass that venture, it was generally believed that he married for money. Certainly a more ill-tempered companion he could not have selected; and she was, besides, the senior by several years. After living together, in constant bickerings, the wife at last died, leaving an only child, a daughter, behind her.

Perhaps if Mr. Owens had found a suitable companion, and lived a happy domestic life, his sympathies might have expanded, though they had been narrow originally; but his married life soured him against his fellows, and increased his selfish love of greed. He now devoted his whole energies to the acquisition of money. To be the richest man in the place became his ambition; and to achieve this end he spared neither industry, nor, it must be confessed, worse means. As soon as he acquired more capital than he could employ in his store, he began to lend money to farmers in the vicinity, pursuing in all cases, the plan he had adopted toward Mr. Forester; and when, by thus adding interest to principal, and again adding fresh interest to both, he had increased the original debt to about half the value of the farm, he seized the first opportunity, when times grew hard, to demand payment. Most generally his victims, frightened by the very threat of a public sale, were glad to compromise with him in secret by conveying their property to him, and remaining as his tenants. Occasionally, however, the mortgage was allowed to be sued out, and, when this happened,

Mr. Owens bought in the place if it sold low, but otherwise not. By these means he had managed to get into his possession, or hold incumbrances on, some of the best farms of the county.

Mr. Owens did not, in his personal appearance, belie his character. How can a man, indeed, surrender himself to the base passions of avarice and extortion, and pursue them for years, without exhibiting their traces in his countenance? Nature revenges herself, and making the face transparent, as it were, forces the inner man to gaze forth, in all his deformity, from the eyes, and even from the features. As Mr. Owens sat, in his little dingy office, back of the store, on the morning in question, doubled up over the rusty stove, with everything dingy and dusty about him, he looked like some huge ugly spider lying in wait, in the midst of his web. Though not older in years than Mr. Forester, he had nothing of the fresh, pleasant look of the latter; but was so withered and dried up, that he might have been mistaken for a mummy, only for the restless glitter of his suspicious eye. His brows overhung the deep sockets like a shaggy penthouse; his cheeks were fallen in; and his under jaw projected: a physiognomist, in short, would have pronounced him, at the first glance, to be just the sordid and pitiless usurer he was.

Yet it was said that there was one thing this miserable old man did love; and that was his only daughter, a young lady of about Julia's age. In childhood, indeed, the two girls had attended the same school, and been quite intimate with each other, nor had the friendship ever been broken off. But Clara Owens had been spending the last two years in Philadelphia, so that Julia had not seen her but once in that period. It was a privation for Mr. Owens to be separated from his child in this way, but as she liked the gay life of a city, and never appeared happy at home after the first week, he consented to it for her sex, only indemnifying himself by a visit, every other month, to town. In these visits it flattered him to hear of the sensation his daughter's magnificent wardrobes created, and of the admiration and envy with which she was regarded: and when he returned, if he was not thinking of accumulating more money, he was thinking of Clara. But we digress, or seem to.

"Is Mr. Owens at home?" said Julia, entering the store, and assuming a calm exterior, though her spirits were low enough.

The clerk gave a second glance at that beautiful face, though he had seen it a hundred times before, and with more politeness than was usual to him, answered,

"He is, Miss Forester: will you walk back?"

With these words he left the customer he was waiting upon, and leading to the back end of the store, opened a door and ushered Julia into the presence of her father's creditor.

Mr. Owens was sitting, with a pen behind his ear, crouching over the stove to keep himself warm, for there was scarcely any fire, and his clothing, though originally sufficiently thick for the season, had years ago been worn thread-bare and thin. The room, lighted by a couple of small windows, which appeared as if they had not been washed for years, was quite dark, so that, as the door was opened, and a gush of brilliant daylight streamed in, the old man looked up, with a blink, and could not immediately recognize his visitor. He rose, however, and desired her to take a seat. Julia glanced around for a chair, but there was only an old stool, the legs of which, having lost their cross-pieces, had been fastened rudely together with a bit of unplanned board, nailed roughly on. The other furniture of the apartment was in character. A long desk stood under the windows, originally painted blue, but having only a few vestiges of that color now remaining; a box, turned upside down, and placed in one corner, supported a pitcher, a broken tumbler, and a cracked wash-bowl; and rows of old ledgers, covered with dust, and files of old bills, still dustier, occupied one entire side of the room. Mr. Owens had apparently been engaged, until the cold forced him to desist, at his usual task of computing interest, or examining accounts, for an open day-book lay on the desk, and the ink in the pen behind his ear was still liquid.

On recognizing Julia he gave a dry cough, which was almost a grunt, and divining immediately her purpose, turned his back abruptly on her, and returned to his desk.

But the brave girl, who, having once undertaken her task, was determined to go through with it, would not allow herself to be rebuffed by this rudeness, but having waited a moment to see whether he meant to attend to her or not, spoke courageously out.

"Mr. Owens," she said, "I have called to see you on some business of father's."

Here she paused, thinking he would now turn toward her, but, as he did not, she resumed,

"I hope," were her words, "that you do not particularly want the money he owes you, just at this juncture, for, as you know, it is almost impossible to obtain even the smallest sums——"

Poor Julia, with the best intentions in the world, was ignorant how to conduct her case most skilfully, or she would not have given the usurer this chance to turn her words upon herself. But it made little difference: however

adroitly she had pleaded, the result would have been the same.

He faced about, interrupting her, at this point, his little, sharp, eager eyes sparkling with triumph.

"And if it is impossible to obtain even the smallest sums, Miss, how have you the effrontery to come here soliciting so large a one?"

"I—I do not ask you to lend us anything," stammered Julia, breathless with the violence of this unexpected attack.

"You don't—don't you?" interrupted the creditor again, and this time with a sneering laugh. "Isn't every cent due that your father owes me? Won't I be lending it again if I don't let the law take its course? And what better security has he got to offer than I had before, and which I consider insufficient, or I should not have sued out the mortgage?"

There was nothing Mr. Owens disliked so much as to have a woman come as a suppliant, in behalf of a debtor; and he invariably turned on them, at the first chance the conversation offered, in this fierce and brutal way. Generally the visitor burst into tears, and was terrified into a speedy departure. But Julia, though she was at first paralyzed by the unexpected assault, and though her blood boiled afterward with indignation, was not one to be driven off thus. Her spirit rose.

"Surely, sir," she said, "my father's farm is ample security for your claim. It has always been considered worth twice that sum. But two years ago, if I recollect, he was offered even more than that, yet declined it."

For an instant the creditor gazed on the animated speaker, with something like admiration: for, in all his experience, he had never been confronted so boldly before. But immediately he answered with a sneer of contempt,

"Two years ago is not now. Your father's farm, Miss, is worth only what it will bring. If you can get twice as much as my debt for it, I see no reason why you have come here."

Julia felt the tears ready to start, but, by a strong effort, she checked them. She saw that she might as well hope to move this man with her entreaties as to melt granite, and she scorned to let him see that he had power to affect her spirits.

She rose from her seat, therefore, and stood proudly before him.

"Sir," she said, "what your motives are, in this, God only knows. As we are in your power, as the law allows your cruelty, our hereditary acres will become yours, it is plain, for half their value. You will have the pleasure," she spoke

now with a bitter emphasis, "of turning an old man, who has no other enemy in the wide world but you, out of doors a beggar, and in the depth of winter——"

"I only want my rights," growled the creditor, sullenly.

"You only want your rights?" impetuously answered Julia, stretching out her arm with the air of a princess, till even her steel-hearted listener started. "You will take his little all, and add it to your stock, though it can swell that but in a small degree. But your triumph will be only for a short time. You, like him, are old, and will soon have to die. When you meet at the bar of God it will be his turn, for your riches can do you no good there; while he, and all others you have plundered, will rise up in judgment against you. I came here, thinking you had the heart of a man; but as you have not, I will not remain to plead to you. Yet, in the name of my father whom you have ruined, and of others whom I feel that you have robbed in the same way, I call on God above to take vengeance for the crimes by which you disgrace humanity."

Carried away by the sense of bitter wrong, Julia had poured forth this passionate torrent of words, with a rapidity that would have prevented interruption, even if her hearer had attempted it. But he was struck speechless, in part by what he considered the audacity of his visitor, and in part by hearing truths which no one had ventured to pronounce in his presence for years, and whose utterance even by his conscience he had long since stifled. Before he could recover from his stupor of rage and bewilderment, Julia had swept by him with the air of a Zenobia, and was leaving the store.

"Ah! go, you jade," he snarled, shaking his clenched hand at her. "A devil's life you'll lead the man that gets you." He paused a moment, and then added. "But you shall smart for this. You said I'd turn you out of doors, beggars, and I will. Yes! literally beggars, beggars, beggars."

He repeated the word again and again, hissing it out with a kind of savage joy: and then opening his iron-safe, took out some papers, put on his hat, and went forth.

III.—THE EXPULSION.

WHEN Julia and her father met, the latter knew, at the first glance, that she had failed in her mission. The interview took place when he came in to dinner. Julia had just arrived in time to change her dress, and set the table for this meal; but, though she tried, she could not

banish from her countenance, all traces of her late emotion. The storm of contending feelings, of pity and love for her father, and of indignation against his creditor, which had raged in her bosom all the way home, had not yet entirely subsided.

Mr. Forester took her hand kindly and said, while she averted her face.

"I thank you, my child, for the effort you made: but I see it has been in vain." Then, after a pause he added, solemnly, lifting his eyes to the ceiling, "the Lord's will be done."

Julia throw herself impulsively on his bosom, and hiding her face there, burst into tears. She could not keep her emotion to herself any longer. This relieved her, so that, after a while, she looked up, smiling through her tears.

"Never mind, dear father," she said, "for they can't separate us: and while we are together, we will be happy in spite of them." As she spoke, she clung to him fondly, her beautiful face radiant with affection.

"We will not be entirely beggars," said the old man, smiling also, stooping and kissing her forehead, "for there is the stock, which is worth something, and the furniture. We shall have no use for most of it, and had better sell what we don't want. With the proceeds we can support ourselves in the village till I can look about for something to do."

Julia seemed about to speak; but hesitated: at last, however, she remarked,

"Perhaps we can get the old place on rent, which would be best of all."

But her father shook his head.

"No, my dear, we must not hope for that. Times are so hard that there will be no one, I fear, but Mr. Owens to buy the farm; and with him," he stopped a minute, added, with emotion, "I can hereafter have no transactions."

Julia felt that her father was right. But she said nothing. Only she heaved a half audible sigh, which she checked immediately.

That day and the next were passed, at the old farm-house, in that state of uneasy expectation, when some great disaster is known to be impending, but when the exact time the blow will fall is uncertain. The interval, however, allowed Julia time to recover her usual equanimity, which the interview with Mr. Owens had disturbed. Her smile was again bright, her step buoyant, her words cheerful; and, as she went to and fro, in her household duties, her old songs were sung as before. Her father saw and heard with joy, but a joy not unallied to melancholy. "She is young and sanguine," he reflected, "and recovers from trouble as soon as the

immediate pressure is removed. Ah! when she grows old, she will not forget so easily."

But Julia did not forget, as events soon proved. She only kept up this show of spirits, in order to console her father; and the instant she was alone at night, the smile faded, and the song was hushed. How little do even the best of men understand a loving woman, concealing her own great sorrow that she may cheer a father, brother, or husband, frequently doing this for a life-time, and dying often at the end without the secret of her self-sacrifice being discovered.

The third day after Julia's interview with Mr. Owens was cloudy and threatening. About noon the weather assumed such a lowering appearance, that Mr. Forester, on coming in to dinner, was persuaded by his daughter to remain in the house for the rest of the day. After the table had been set away, and the floor neatly swept up, Julia and he drew their chairs before the fire; Mr. Forester having the old family Bible open on his lap, and his daughter being busy with her sewing. From time to time the father looked up, when his eye almost immediately met that of his child, for some subtle magnetic influence seemed to tell her he was regarding her: and the smile which, at such moments, lit up her countenance, was radiant as a benignant angel's. Nothing could be more beautiful than Julia's whole appearance as it was on that afternoon. Her dress, though of plain materials, fitted her admirably. It was cut high in the neck, with tight sleeves as was then the mode: a style especially adapted to exhibit, yet modestly, her rounded arms, graceful bust, and shapely shoulders. One little foot peeped out from under her frock: the other was hidden coyly behind the thick draperies. Her magnificent brown hair was worn in plain bands in front, a fashion that suited well her air of serious dignity; and was gathered behind into a simple knot: if unloosed, it would have fallen to her feet, as she sat. Over the whole person and countenance there was an atmosphere of sweet, household quiet, indescribable in words. Wonderfully bewitching, indeed, is a woman in a home-dress at her own fireside.

As the afternoon advanced, the storm commenced in earnest. At first a few flakes of snow drifted slowly downward, at long intervals apart; but gradually they increased in frequency and rapidity, until soon the more distant landscape was entirely shut out by the fast-falling shower: and finally even the neighboring wood, which was separated from the house by a single field only, was but dimly perceptible. A white sheet now covered the landscape. The fences and old

Underwoods were tipped with white also. For most of the time the flakes descended in profound silence, and almost perpendicularly, but occasionally a gust would dash them against the window, or send them chasing each other in boisterous play across the front-yard and into the field beyond. How pleasant it was to sit by the cheerful fire, in that warm, cozy room, and hearing the wind whistle without, or watching the ever falling flakes, know that neither could reach you.

Suddenly the sound of carriage wheels, half muffled by the snow, was heard, and immediately a vehicle drew up at the gate. Two men leaped out from the wagon, which turned about and drove back.

The eyes of the father and child met in curious inquiry, but no time was left for words; for the men entered the front-yard, and were heard, the next moment, on the door-step thumping the snow off their boots. Mr. Forester would have admitted the strangers, but Julia sprang before him.

When the foremost visitor had removed his cap, both Julia and her father started, knowing his presence betokened no good; for he had once been in the farmer's employ, but having been discharged for unworthiness, had ever since pursued him with undisguised hatred. He had now been, for many years, a drunken loungee at taverns and a hanger on about the court-house; and Mr. Forester remembered to have heard that he was sometimes employed as a sheriff's officer, to do dirty work of which his principal was ashamed. This recollection, coupled with the dismissal of the carriage, implying that he and his companion had come to stay, revealed to the old man the intruder's errand, so that he was not surprised at what followed.

"I've a little business with you, squire," said this bloated wretch, leering aside at Julia insolently as he spoke, and extending a paper, with a triumphant grin, toward her father. "This is a levy, as you will see, on your furniture and stock."

The old man bowed with dignity, but could not, it was evident, trust himself to speak. Julia, seeing his internal emotion, and eager to shield him, boldly interposed, though she had, as yet, only a glimpse of the man's purpose.

"What is it you mean, sir?" she said. "I am mistress here."

The man stared at her, for an instant, and answered,

"Mean, Miss? Why that this 'ere's an execution on the houseful stuff, cattle, hay, grain, and whatever else your father has."

"An execution!"

"Yes, Miss, at the suit of Mr. Owens."

"We owe Mr. Owens nothing but the mortgage on the farm," spiritedly began Julia.

But the officer interrupted her with a coarse laugh.

"You'll find that enough, I reckon. Mr. Owens don't think his security on the farm sufficient, and so has proceeded on the bond also; and I calculate, Miss, it'll take all, these ere times, to pay him off."

Julia drew in her breath, looking toward her father; for she never had heard before that a creditor could have two remedies for his debt. The old man, understanding her mute appeal, shook his head hopelessly, by which she knew that all the officer had said was true.

"Well, sir," she said, drawing toward her father, "go on with your work."

But here Mr. Forester, who had been silent hitherto, interposed.

"Surely Mr. Owens cannot be in earnest," he said, addressing the officer. "The farm is worth more than enough to pay his debt. He runs no risk."

"Look here, squire," said the fellow, bluntly and insolently. "They say its a long lane that has no turning, and, though you've had a pretty good time of it, your turn has come at last, I reckon. Sertain it is, Mr. Owens hates you like pisin, and don't care to hide it. He as good as said he was doing this ere to be revenged on you, for he said, over and over again, when he was at the office, that he'd beggar you, and not leave you even a bed to sleep in; and my orders," added the bailiff, with another grin of exultation, that made his repulsive face look even more bestial, "is to give you no grace whatsoever, but to take everything the law allows."

At the period of which we write, no homestead laws had been passed anywhere, and the debtor was entirely at the mercy of his creditor. In the commonwealth, where the scene of our story lies, the few trifles protected from sale on execution was a mockery, nor had even imprisonment for debt been abolished. When, therefore, Mr. Forester heard these words, he knew that he was utterly ruined, and that his heartless creditor might even finish by sending him to jail.

The officer saw, with cruel joy, the anguish he was inflicting. For years he had nourished a wild vision of having his revenge; yet had scarcely dared to hope for a day like this. He gazed a moment, in silence, on the pallid face of his victim, and then went on, with a chuckle,

"You see, squire, you'd better prepare for the worst. There'll be nobody, I reckon, to bid

for the things, except Mr. Owens, for he's the only man with money hereabouts, these times. He'll not bid much, you know, eh? So it may be worse yet, a capias, and a while in jail."

Julia had stood, sheltering her father, during this conversation, now looking up anxiously into his eyes, and now facing the intruders with almost an angry air. She had been listening to obtain a correct idea of the circumstances: and this she had now secured. Advancing a step, she fixed her eyes haughtily on the officer, and extending her arm proudly, said,

"You were told once before, sir, to go on with your work; and now do it without words. My father wants nothing to say to you, or to your employer. What the law gives, take; and rid us of your presence, when that is done."

"My dear," said Mr. Forester, "these men are to stay here."

"To stay here!"

"Yes, my saucy Miss," laughed the officer, his companion laughing also, and breaking silence for the first time, "we're to stay here. We're masters now. For my part I'll take the spare room, and have a fire in it, with my bed warmed, and all that." He looked at his attendant, as he spoke, and again laughed brutally.

Julia made no answer for a full minute. She saw how completely they were in the power of these men, and a sense of dignity forbade her to carry on the controversy. At last, after a hurried glance out of doors, she said, addressing Mr. Forester,

"Father, this is no place for us. Let us leave the house. We will find somebody to shelter us, in the village. Jerry can drive us there."

She put her arm into that of her father, who looked toward the peg where his hat hung; and the two were already moving away, when the officer spoke again, turning to the father.

"You may go, squire, if you choose; and I'm sure I don't care a d— if you do: but you know enough of law to know you can't take the wagon, or remove anything else."

"Is it so, father?" asked Julia, not deigning to look at the officers.

"It is, my child."

She hesitated a little, and then said. "We

will go, nevertheless, if you don't fear the storm, father. I'll wrap you up warmly in your cloak."

"But you, my daughter——"

"If! Oh! nothing can hurt me," said Julia, with a smile. "If that is all, come. I will but tell Jerry to watch for us," she whispered to him, "and then we will leave these wretches to themselves; for the place is our home no longer."

Her father, who saw nothing to be gained by remaining but insult, which he could not avenge, even if he had desired, and who was eager, therefore, to remove his daughter from the presence of the officers, assented. His momentary depression seemed to pass away, as soon as he had come to this conclusion. He straightened himself up, and looking calmly at the bailiff, till the eye of the man quailed, with all its effrontery, proceeded to assume his great-coat, to put on the heavy boots he had removed after dinner, and to carefully lay away his Bible.

Julia, who had left the room, now reappeared, followed by Jerry, their head servant. She was equipped for walking.

"Mr. Northwell," she said, turning to this faithful follower, "you will see that these men make a proper inventory, and that they lay aside, under your direction, the articles the law allows. Now, father, I am ready."

Jerry, scowling at the officers, sprang to open the door. Julia, as she spoke, threw over her father a cloak she had brought: and then moved to the door, her hand in his. When they emerged into the open air a sudden gust dashed past, almost blinding them with snow.

"Darn their picters," said Jerry, excited beyond control, "I'll go and hitch old Sal to the wagon, in spite of 'em, if you'll say the word, squire, or you, Miss Julia."

"No," said the old man, laying his hand on Jerry's shoulder impressively. "We will have no contention. The wicked shall not always prevail, the Lord hath said."

Jerry shook his head, and muttered to himself, but said nothing openly. He pressed his old master's hand, with emotion, and when they moved away, remained sadly watching their figures, till they disappeared in the storm.

(TO BE CONTINUED)

"DIAMOND CUT DIAMOND."

BY CARRY STANLEY.

"Now, Phil, do shut up that book," said Florence Imbrie to her brother. "What is the reason that people read in the cars, who never open a book at any other time? You have no consideration in the world for my feelings, and take my banishment to this out of the way place with as much coolness as if it was the most delightful thing in the world. As to going with mamma to visit that stately old dowager, it was out of the question; I should have come away looking like Rip Van Winkle when he awoke from his sleep in the mountains. Oh, the very thought of her chairs makes my back ache. I guess they 'came over in the May Flower.' Why in the world did mamma bundle me off to the country at this time of the year?"

"She wished to restore your roses after a winter's dissipation; and a summer at a watering place does not do much toward that," was the reply.

"Well, it is too bad. I've made every preparation in the world for Saratoga or the sea shore, to say nothing of my reception mornings at home. Madame Le Tour has finished me some of the most becoming morning and dinner dresses you can imagine, and as to my bonnets—oh, Phil! you haven't seen that love of a pink bonnet that Devy reserved purposely for me. It is perfectly bewitching. There never was such a wonderful emanation, from a milliner's brain, of tulle, and lace, and flowers. Ah! a good milliner must be a poet as well as an artist. That's *par parenthesis*. I assure you a dozen wanted it, but Devy said it was my style exactly, and would not sell it. But what is the use of looking like an angel in the country?"

"I suppose that did not prevent you from bringing all those same beautiful things with you though, Flor," said her brother, as he watched, with some amusement, his sister's half vexed, half comical expression.

"To be sure I brought them. They will be entirely out of fashion before I go home: for I believe I am to be buried alive for the summer." And Florence, as she finished, threw herself back in her seat with an air of forced resignation.

For a while the restless tapping of the little hand was still, and her vexed features grew into

repose, as she watched the sleepy, elderly gentleman, dozing over the newspaper, and the young ladies ungloving their hands to show their rings, and the children munching their apples and gingerbread, and crying by way of interlude. But presently she started up again with, "I say, Phil, *will* you put down that book? In what part of Europe did Uncle Robert acquire a taste for pork and cabbage? the idea of any man in his senses settling down in the country is totally incomprehensible. I suppose there will be nothing in the shape of a man one can flirt with. Uncle Robert won't do, he's mamma's brother, and little Frank is not much more than a baby, and as to that Basil Cleaveland, he is a great deal worse than nobody; this having a handsome man in the room and not admiring one's self, it is an actual punishment. Phil, do you hear me? What a funny thing it must be to have a husband already cut and dried for one. Basil Cleaveland! what a pretty name. Did Anne seem very melancholy and very much in love, when you were in Europe together? I shouldn't thank anybody for willing a husband to me, if I was Anne. It is something like being a princess though, they are always affianced when they are children, but I think I would just as soon marry you, Phil, as one I had always seen so much of; there's no romance in it. If Anne is not very much in love, and the gentleman is handsome and agreeable, I may condescend to fascinate him a little; that pink bonnet will do it."

And so Florence rattled on, sometimes to her brother's amusement, sometimes to his annoyance, till they reached the depot, where their uncle's carriage met them.

"Really, Anne, this is quite a handsome room: the house is not built of logs, I suppose," was Florence's exclamation soon after her arrival.

"We think the place beautiful," was the reply. "I am——"

"Oh, I dare say," interrupted Florence, "but really, coz, I care nothing at all about the beauties of nature; I have seen Niagara and the White Mountains, and must confess that I think the beauties of art, assembled in the dining-rooms or drawing-rooms of Newport or Saratoga, much better. Now, Anne, child, I like you all

very much, but to be candid, I came here because mamma obliged me to. Now, if I was engaged to be married, like you, I should feel it my duty to settle down in some quiet place, to prepare my mind for the awful event. By the way, *cara mia*, when are you to be married? Not soon, I hope, for then there will be no possibility of getting up a flirtation with Mr. Cleaveland when he comes."

"I do not know," replied Anne, gravely, "the subject is never mentioned between us. We are not very ardent lovers to be sure. I sometimes wish Basil would speak of it, but he neither asks me to marry him, nor releases me."

"Anne, dear, do you love Mr. Cleaveland?"

"Don't ask me, Florence," was the reply, as her cousin kissed her good night.

"Well, now, that is rather singular," soliloquized Florence, when left alone. "Why, Anne, you foolish thing, you might as well have told me, for as I am a woman, I'll find out in spite of you, and flirt with your husband elect, too, if you are not too much in love with him yourself," and with this landable intent upon the heart of Basil Cleaveland, Florence prepared for bed.

The magnificent city belle arose the next day, with the full expectation of being ennuied to death; but in some way, she could not tell how, the time never seemed to pass more quickly. It was very strange! No morning loungers in loose coats and buff colored kids dropped in; no representative of young America, with one arm thrown over the back of his chair, and with his other hand rattling his tiny pearl-headed cane against his pearly teeth, called forth her fascinations and her satire at the same time; no dear young friend stopped "just for a second," to tell her that the Baron Von B——, of the last German exportation, had declared to her that he was dying of love for the fair Florence, or to coax her up to Lawson's show-rooms, "before the most beautiful things in the world were sold."

Yes, it was strange; but some how the golden shadows on the wavy grass stole with their rich mellowing influence into her heart, and the perfume from the clusters of white and purple lilacs, and from the velvet blossoms of the brown and orange striped wall flowers, intoxicated her senses as her ball-room bouquets had never done.

Day after day, passed in a kind of dreamy pleasure to Florence; the spoiled girl seemed to have lost half her faults, and her coquetry, to have died a natural death. She fascinated all the visitors at her uncle's, with her winning manners, and Le Tour's elegant dresses; but as she told her brother, she thought the air around

Ashley had a healthy moral as well as physical tone, as she found it did not agree with a flirting constitution.

Florence often spent half her mornings with Mrs. Willits, the wife of her uncle's farmer, who tried to initiate her into all the mysteries of country housewifery, as Florence gravely informed her she meant to marry a farmer. Many a lesson did she take in baking, pickling and preserving.

One morning at the breakfast table, a letter was handed to Mr. Ashley, which he read, then threw to his daughter, saying,

"Well, Anne, your recreant knight is tired of travelling, and he says he will be here by the second, so we may look for him to-morrow or the day after at the latest."

"Well, Anne," said Florence, "I expect you want to spend the day in preparing your affections for the Prince Royal; so come, Frank, you and I'll go down to help Mrs. Willits make cheese. Aunt Mary, I am almost fit for a farmer's wife already."

And Frank, who was ever ready for a scamper with his beautiful, gay-hearted cousin, ran for his hat, and off the two went, over the dewy grass, down the hill, to the meadowy hollow, where the farmer's house stood.

And a jewel of a house it was too, according to Florence, neither very large, nor very new, but neat and comfortable, and beautifully situated, shaded in front by two large oak trees, which waved over a little green lawn, that swept down to a clear stream which wound through the meadow beyond. At the back of the house, on one side, was a rude trellis work, gay now with the scarlet bean, and the velvet flowered morning glories; and at the other, the clean, cool, brick shed, where snowy milk pails, and glistening pans stood in a row. But the pride of Mrs. Willits' heart was her garden and dairy. The former was gay in the spring time, with flaunting red peonies, and golden balled cocus, and gaudy tulip cups, that would sway and bend beneath the weight of the robber bee; or bright with the promises of green curling salad, and crisp radishes, and red veined beets, and early peas, whose blossoms added to the garden's beauty. But now it was fairly gorgeous with hollyhocks, marigolds, and painted peas, four-o'clocks, and little yellow coreopsis, with their rich brown centre, and all a country housewife's favorite flowers; and fragrant with thyme and lavender, and sage, and chamomile, covered with glistening, white clam shells, which could not keep the feathery green of the plant entirely down.

As to the dairy house, it was refreshing just to look at it. It was built of stone, over a spring, and was as white as lime could make it. Three large drooping willow trees overshadowed it. Oh! what delicious coolness, when the door was opened, and when you descended the three little steps leading into it. How softly the spring murmured, and how clear the water was, and how the white milk gleamed from the pans, and how temptingly the balls of golden butter looked in the half darkness.

No wonder Florence loved to visit the farmer's good wife.

"Mrs. Willits, Mrs. Willits," said she, on approaching the house, "do let me break up that curd for you to-day."

"Well, so you shall, Miss Florence; I have just taken it from the press," and turning the cheese from the vat into her nicely painted tub, the good woman gave Florence a large knife, then disappeared in the cheese room, to turn her treasures and rub them with cayenne pepper.

Florence commenced cutting the snowy curd into large slices; and in a short time she had a large congregation of the feathered tribe around her; young chickens, who took no thought of their death in the coming winter, and downy, half-grown ducks, who had not arrived at the dignity of feathers.

And now the huge pieces were compressed between Florence's white fingers, till they came out fine and flaky, and the little flock around her became clamorous. Good Mrs. Willits would have held up her hands in horror, had she been present, to have seen her cheese diminish so rapidly under her guest's generosity, for she held that "Ingen meal" was good enough any time for ducks and chickens, who couldn't earn their own living.

Florence went on distributing the cheese lavishly, moralizing over the greedy rabble. "Here, ducky, ducky, ducky," called she at last, when she thought the sharp bills of the chickens had the advantage.

And, "here, ducky, ducky, ducky," was repeated behind her, as her head was clasped between two strong hands, and drawn back till a kiss was imprinted on her forehead.

Florence, as soon as released, turned in astonishment, and some little anger, to look behind her. A tall, handsome stranger stood there, who seemed as much surprised as herself, and was evidently embarrassed deeply at the liberty he had taken.

"I ask your pardon, madam," he stammered, "I thought it was Anne."

"No, it is not Anne," said Florence, shortly, at once conjecturing it was Cleaveland; and assuming an air of cold dignity. "Here, ducky, ducky," she continued, turning away from him, and she commenced throwing out the curd to the ducks with frightful rapidity.

The stranger bowed and departed, and Mrs. Willits coming in a moment after, and seeing the retreating figure, exclaimed, "Lor bless me, there's Mr. Cleaveland, as sure as I live. He often leaves his baggage at the station house, and walks over, when the weather's fine. I didn't know he was coming so soon."

Florence said nothing about the mistake which had been made, but calling Frank, soon after, took her departure.

As she ascended the steps of her uncle's mansion, she espied her cousin standing in the open door.

"Here, Anne," exclaimed she, "I have had the first kiss from your husband elect. But do not be jealous, my dear; he didn't mean to bestow such a *surprising* mark of esteem on me. He is a tolerably good-looking kind of man, and I think I may possibly find him worth fascinating, with your permission, *ma cousine*."

Every word which Florence had spoken had been heard by Basil Cleaveland, who was standing at an open window, just above her, and giving one short, expressive whistle, he said mentally, with a smile, "that is your game, is it, my Lady Cleopatra? it will take two, though, to play it out, methinks."

Florence determined to commence her attack upon the citadel at once, and Anne saw with some amusement, her cousin's elaborate dinner costume, when she went to the table, though as far as Mr. Cleaveland was concerned, neither that nor Florence's brilliant conversation seemed to be noticed by him.

He conversed with all more than he did with the fair belle, and as she afterward petulantly observed, "ate his soup, and drank his wine, as if he really enjoyed them."

Several weeks passed, with apparently no better success. Basil Cleaveland was dressed for, sung for, and talked for; yet seemed to be insensible of it all.

"I declare," said Florence one day to her cousin, "I would rather undertake to make a whole ball-room of New York beaux in love with me, than a man like this Don Basil, who spends half his life in the country, thinking. His heart is like a nether mill-stone. I wonder, Anne, if he likes 'elegant simplicity.' I think I must try that."

And consequently, Florence's tactics changed

Immediately, flowers were substituted for jewelry—the most brilliant conversation had now a touch of sentiment in it; the difficult music, which heretofore had been selected to show off her rich *contralto* voice, was laid aside, and simple, touching songs, took its place.

Perhaps the new scheme was unnecessary, for a gradual change seemed to be coming over Mr. Cleaveland. He more frequently joined the girls, and Philip in their walks and rides, occasionally accompanied Florence when singing, and as she thought, sometimes steadily watched her, when she was in conversation with other gentlemen.

At last he said, one day, "come, ladies, what do you say to a good gallop this delightful morning. Philip and myself will be charmed to have your company; and, Miss Florence, I have a beautiful little horse, just suited for a lady, which I should feel honored if you would ride."

Florence went to prepare for the excursion, in high spirits.

"What a beautiful creature! What is its name?" asked she, as she mounted.

"I call him Mischief," was the reply.

"Mischief! oh, that is ominous. I am really afraid of him, Mr. Cleaveland."

Anne looked astonished, and Philip amused, for they both knew that Florence was an accomplished rider, and afraid of nothing.

But Basil Cleaveland retained the little hand longer than was necessary, after he had lifted her to the saddle, as he said in a low voice, "the horse is very gentle, I assure you, Florence. Had it not been so, I would not, for the world, risk your life on him."

He felt the hand he held tremble, and whilst Florence bent over to caress her horse, in order to conceal the flush which had mantled to her face, he sprang upon his own animal, and the party set off.

"Why, Flor, what is the matter with you? have you taken the vow of La Trappe, that you won't speak," asked her brother.

She looked up, and her eyes met those of Basil Cleaveland fixed on her. In truth, the gay girl was totally subdued. She had fully made up her mind, whilst putting on her riding dress, that she would play the timid young lady to perfection; that Mr. Cleaveland should adjust her reins, times without number; that her stirrup strap should be too long or too short; in fact that he should never leave her side; but now she rode on silently, almost feeling as if she wished to escape from the very man, whom, an hour before, she had been devising plans to keep by her exclusively. She longed to be at home in her own room, to examine into the multi-

tinuous feelings of her own heart, which was very much like Pandora's box, with hope at the bottom. But then came the question, "can he have been trifling too?" after which a long reverie was ended with, "I came very near being caught in my own trap, I vow."

"Very near!" Poor Florence, it had only been "very near," had things ended there, but when her eyes again met his in dismounting, and her hand was again detained for a moment, she said to herself, "surely he *must* be in earnest."

Again the weeks flew by, leaving Florence in a trance of happiness. Her glad laugh was less seldom heard, but her smile was sweeter, if less gay than formerly. Basil Cleaveland was ever by her side, with whispered words in her ear, and his dark eyes bent on her, till she felt as if under some mesmeric spell.

One day Philip returned from the post-office with a letter, which he handed to his sister, saying,

"Here, Florence, you declared you should die if you did not get to Newport this summer, and mamma, in order to preserve your valuable life, has written to say that if you will go home immediately, she will spend a week or so there, till the season closes."

Florence looked perfectly blank, and replied immediately,

"I do not want to go at all."

A smile of thanks immediately beamed on Basil Cleaveland's face, which noticing, she continued,

"I have not a dress fit to wear at a place of the kind now, and there would be no time to have any made; for everybody will have left Newport, who was worth meeting, by the time I should be ready to go."

Another smile, which puzzled Florence, gleamed in Mr. Cleaveland's eyes.

But now, as time passed, she began to feel less happy than she had been. She missed the whispered words, and the steady looking through her own eyes into her soul, which had so enthralled her; till gradually Mr. Cleaveland's manner became as coolly polite as it had been on their first acquaintance.

But Florence Imbrie's pride suffered her to make no change in her demeanor. Her old, gay spirits seemed to have returned, and her manner was as cordial as formerly; there was a laughing defiance in her eye, which seemed to say, "not quite caught yet, you see."

One night, as Florence was about retiring, Anne entered her chamber, saying,

"Coz, if you are not too sleepy, I want to tell you something."

"Never was more wide awake in my life. Has the grand signor asked you to marry him yet?" was the reply.

"If you mean Basil, he says he wont have me, but——" and Anne stopped and blushed.

"But—Phil will, I suppose you mean to say. Well, you will make a dear little sister-in-law, to be sure. Pray, why has your prince royal condescended to release you at last."

"He told me this morning that he feared we loved each other too much as cousins, ever to be happy as husband and wife, but since, as if we did not marry, half of the fortune which Uncle John left us was to go to other heirs, he did not like to break off our engagement, as it would diminish my portion so much; but said that he had thought lately that we should both be happier without the money than with it."

"And Phil thought so too, I suppose. Well, you dear little soul, I am glad of it. You are rich enough yet, in all conscience, even if Philip was not, and he has too much money for his own good."

Florence retired that night with renewed hopes. She now thought that the alteration in Mr. Cleaveland's conduct arose from a doubt as to whether Anne would really release him. There appeared now no obstacles to her love, and with happy dreams of the future, she went to sleep.

But with the morning's dawn, the old wilfulness returned. She began to consider whether she should not refuse him at first, just to let him see that she was not to be had too easily; but alas, for Florence's resolution, a week passed, and Basil Cleaveland's manner never changed from the indifference which had marked it for so long a time.

The green beauty of summer had given way to the gorgeousness of autumn; the ash and the hickory threw out their banners of crimson and gold on the edge of the woods; the many-hued maple and the russet leaved oak tree, sent out musical whisperings on the still air; above the brown fields and gay woods a solitary crow wheeled and cawed, seeming to add to the quiet which reigned around, and over all came the purple haze, known only in our autumns, which heightens their beauty by partially concealing it.

But not such was the landscape on which Florence Imbrie gazed half abstractedly. The rain came down in heavy pattering drops, with a ringing, musical sound on the fallen leaves. The wind sighed and moaned through the desolate, empty chambers of the woods, rocking with a wailing voice, the oriole in its nest, or sending a gust of fine rain tinkling against the window

frame by which Florence leaned. The twilight was fast deepening into darkness, and yet Florence stood as she had been standing for half an hour, partially concealed by the curtains, her tall, elegant figure looking perfectly statuesque in its immovability.

A well known step at length crossed the room, although she was not conscious that she had been watched for some moments before. The old defiant light rose to her eyes, which but now were so sad, as she gaily exclaimed,

"By the pricking of my thumbs,
Something evil this way comes."

In a moment after she was joined by Basil Cleaveland, who said,

"Positively, Miss Florence, you are growing sentimental latterly; what is the matter? I have always observed that only young ladies in love have such intense liking, as you seem to have, for dreary, rainy days; it is so conducive to reverie, you know," and there was a "mocking devil" in his tone, that almost made the proud girl stamp her foot with anger.

"Judging by myself, Mr. Cleaveland, your observations are correct, for I am *not* in love, and I assure you that I cordially dislike these Indian ink landscapes. I was just wondering when Philip would get over his intoxication enough to leave Anne, for the country is getting disagreeably cool."

"Yes, so much so, that I intend starting for the South in a few days. I really do not know how I am to bring my mind to coming north, to Anne's wedding in January."

"Well, I suppose Mr. Newton will not refuse to marry her, because you are not here to give your consent," replied Florence, steadily.

Basil Cleaveland darted a quick glance at the speaker, but the twilight had deepened so much that he could not see whether there was any traces of emotion on her face, although she still leaned against the window. There was a moment's silence, when Florence, having put out her hand to draw a larger chair toward her, the curtain, as she turned, brushed a cluster of splendid crimson sumach leaves from her hair. They fell at Cleaveland's feet, who picked them up, but instead of returning them to her, he said,

"Will you not let me keep these, Miss Florence? I should like a memento of you that has some sentiment in it. I want to remember you in your subdued mood, you know," and again that light, self-collected, mocking tone fell upon her ear.

"Of course," was the reply, in a voice in which not a trace of wounded pride or affection could

be recognized. "Of course I could not refuse to so intimate an acquaintance as yourself, what I have granted to some dozens of others."

"Well," exclaimed Cleaveland, gaily, twirling the leaves in his hand, "this has been a pleasant flirtation after all, Miss Florence. What a pity it was only a flirtation!" And, with his rich, mellow voice, he repeated Miss Landon's lines.

"But yet the dream was pleasant, though it hath vanished now,
Like shaking down loose blossoms from off the careless bough;
They never came to fruit, and their short lives soon were o'er,
But we passed an hour beneath them, and we never asked for more.
No vows were ever plighted, we had no farewell to say;
Gay were we when we met at first, and we parted just as gay.
There was little to remember, and nothing to regret.
Love touches not the flatterer, love chains not the coquette."

It was well for Florence that the quotation was so long, for it gave her time to recover the firmness of her voice to reply,

"I never knew before, Mr. Cleaveland, how good an elocutionist you were. It is a pity I have missed so much, for I should have tried to have got you to read aloud to Anne and myself, during these hot summer mornings, when we could not stir out of the house."

The next day Florence found her cluster of sumach leaves on the floor, by the chair in which Basil Cleaveland had been sitting, having been carelessly dropped and trodden upon.

During the rest of Cleaveland's stay, Florence's manner never varied toward him. There was no blushing cheek nor drooping lid, no unnatural gaiety to hide wounded love. She never avoided his company, never seemed to wish to hurry her own departure, or delay it till after his; and as he was descending the steps of the piazza to the carriage, on the day he went away, she called out to him in a most acquaintance-like way, "be sure to come back to the wedding, Mr. Cleaveland."

The early part of the winter passed in a series of brilliant triumphs to Florence. The same gay old smile was on her lips, and at times the same saucy sparkle in her eyes, but though none knew why, all felt that her manner was not the same. Irresistible young dandies were not quite so sure of her favor as formerly; those who had sought her before to bandy gay jests with her, now felt the sting of her biting sarcasm at times; and the *blase*, who had liked her for her sparkling freshness of manner, now declared that she had grown suddenly old.

The time for Anne's wedding was now drawing

near, and the middle of January found Florence at Ashley, deep in all the mysteries of satin, lace, and orange flowers.

One afternoon, as Florence stood at the window watching the falling snow, Frank exclaimed,

"Cousin Flor, do let's go out, and have a run, won't you?" Come, we'll snow-ball each other, and then go to see Mrs. Willits."

Florence immediately acceded to the child's request, for her mother and aunt were holding consultations on the cake; Mr. Ashley was taking his after dinner nap in the library; Anne and Philip seemed to be rehearsing the marriage ceremony; and being left to her own resources was not particularly agreeable to her.

The visit to Mrs. Willits detained them till the fast falling snow and the night were coming down together, and by the time Florence had changed her dress and entered the drawing-room, nothing could be seen from the windows but the lawn and fields, enveloped in one vast sheet of white, and the parlor itself was lighted only by the large, bright fire in the grate. This threw out a warm, glowing light over the room, leaving only the large bay window at the further end, shaded by heavy curtains, in shadow.

"Oh, this is delightful after the storm without," exclaimed Florence, just as her aunt was leaving the room; and approaching the fire, she placed one foot on the low fender, and leaning her head against the mantel-piece, she gazed into it abstractedly. Her reverie ended with an audible "heigh-ho," and, going to the piano, she sat down and commenced playing. At first she ran her fingers listlessly over the keys, as if half unconsciously. Then one song followed another, all mournfully sad, and her voice rose in the quiet room, appealingly, almost wailingly in its sorrowfulness.

The curtains by the front bay window moved, and as Florence was sitting with her back to it, she knew not that the room had another occupant, till a well known voice whispered in her ear "Florence."

The piano gave a groan, as Florence placed her hand on the keys in her fright, but as she was not a young lady who was given to fainting, she only said,

"Bless my heart, Mr. Cleaveland, how you frightened me. Why I thought you were in Florida; but I am really glad to see you."

Basil Cleaveland would have been just as well satisfied, if she had not expressed her pleasure quite so freely.

"Why we had given up all expectation of seeing you now, it is so much later than you had promised to be here," continued Florence.

"I came to see you, Florence, rather than to Anne's wedding," was the reply.

"You are very kind. I am sure I appreciate the compliment; Mr. Cleaveland," and a gay laugh ended the sentence.

"Florence will you never have done with this coquetry?" he said, "you know that I love you," and his voice grew thrillingly low as he took her hand, "will you be my wife, Florence?"

The proud girl withdrew her hand, and had not her head been turned away, Basil Cleaveland might have discovered a gleam of triumph in the flashing eyes, as she haughtily answered,

"If you are serious, sir, I shall be under the necessity of declining the honor which you intend me."

She arose from her seat, just as Frank came bounding into the parlor with the intelligence that the mice had been eating the fruit cake, and that as no one could be married without that, he supposed the wedding would be deferred till some more was made.

Florence left the room, saying to herself, "I have had my revenge now;" and if an unwonted gaiety, during the evening, was any indication of her real feelings, she enjoyed it exceedingly.

But as the days passed on, she began to wonder whether it had afforded her the pleasure which she had anticipated. Mr. Cleaveland made no effort to renew the subject; and when, on the night of Anne's wedding, he watched her, with her heavy black hair banded so smoothly over her calm brow, and the unflinching gaze of her dark eyes into his, he inwardly vowed her to be the most finished coquette he had ever known.

A week after the wedding had passed, and Florence had maintained her old manner toward Cleaveland, with the exception of a little more reserve when alone with him.

The night before the departure of the bridal party for their homes had come, and Florence stood at the familiar bay window, gazing out on the moonlight as it bathed the cold evergreened fields, and lighted up the dark evergreens, as they bent beneath the snow-wreaths.

"Your thoughts must be among the stars, Miss Florence," said Cleaveland, approaching.

"No. I was only wondering where we should all be this time next year—a common-place thought enough, you see," was the answer.

"Philip and Anne will scarcely have done cooing by that time, and you, I suppose, will be smiling on some dozens of cavaliers," replied he, bitterly. "As for myself, I may be on the top of one of the pyramids, or sledging with some Russian beauties, down the ice-hills of St. Petersburg."

"Oh! I almost envy you your visit to Europe. I see no chance of getting there myself, for Philip and Anne have been once, you know, and it would be cruel to take mamma flying over the world to please me."

A pause in the conversation ensued for a few moments, when Cleaveland said,

"Miss Imbrie, after to-morrow we may not see each other again for years, perhaps never; and I wish to explain to you what you may have considered ungentlemanly in my behavior. Do you remember our conversation at this window, that rainy twilight, some months since? I commenced it with the full determination of offering myself to you, for I loved you then, Florence; but on the day of my arrival here, I heard you declare to Anne your determination to flirt with me, and I vowed to meet you with your own weapons. I thought I at length discovered that you loved me, but I was ungenerous enough to wish to have a full revenge, though I was totally foiled by your self-possessed manner on that evening. I then determined that you should not see your power over me, so I jested on. During my absence at the South, the hope that you loved me again returned, and it was that, rather than Anne's wedding, which brought me here. I have been convinced of my mistake, and can only crave your forgiveness for having troubled you."

"I surely have nothing to forgive. My girlish vanity led to all this," answered Florence.

Again there was a pause, broken by Cleaveland, who said,

"You will at least think of me kindly, Florence, when I am away?"

But no answer came, for his listener would not trust her voice, and her eyes were full of tears.

"Will you not think of me, Florence?" and Cleaveland took one of her hands in his own, and found it trembled violently.

A whispered "yes," was the reply. It was very low, but it made the heart of Basil Cleaveland leap for joy. The hand was still retained, without an effort on the part of Florence to withdraw it, and an arm stole around her waist.

"Will you not be my wife, Florence? Must I go alone?" said Cleaveland.

We never heard precisely what reply was made, but we judge that it was not "no," for when Philip and Anne entered the room an hour afterward, they heard Florence say,

"Well, we outwitted ourselves as well as each other, for it was 'diamond cut diamond' after all, Basil."

And a few months afterward, in the list of passengers in the "Atlantic" for Europe, we saw the names of "Mr. Basil Cleaveland and lady."

RAMBLES IN AUTHOR LAND.

BY MRS. E. H. PUTNAM.

I.—MY FIRST STORY.

An old man,
Gray and white, and dove-like,
Who had in sooth, a great beard,
And read in a fair, great book,
Beautiful with golden clasps.

ADAM PUSHCHMAN.

My first associations with authorship are strongly connected with an old man who was the father of an early friend. He was a distinguished writer and divine, whose arguments had divided the religious opinions of many minds, but being then upon the threshold of the tomb, his attention was chiefly devoted to reading and conversation with the few persons whom he was able to admit to his society. His personal appearance was remarkable and I thought him almost a god. His hair was like the most beautiful silver shreds, falling on either side of his temples to his shoulders; his eye was mild in expression save when he was animated with the spirit of a favorite topic, then it shone like a fire and reflected a glory upon all his countenance; and his voice was flexible and sweet—such an one as vibrates on the strings of the heart like a deep strain of exquisite melody.

I had read some of his works before I saw him, and I had greatly admired their style, but I could not yield my prejudices in favor of the opinions, for I had been educated by quite another ritual. But when I heard him speak and saw him smile with that benignity which a good man feels whose life lesson is "charity never falleth," I regarded him as a master spirit who commanded the respect, nay, the admiration of all men.

"Is this the man whom I had believed a teacher of error? This an evil man? an apostate?" I asked myself in astonishment. He doubtless divined that some such thought was troubling me, for he smiled and said, "many people think me very dangerous and some consider me as a monster—but it is because I dare to speak what I believe to be the truth. I do not dissemble and clothe my real sentiments in the garments of popular opinion and hypocrisy, that I may please the world and get to myself many friends of the mighty and noble and revered. No, I am a man—a free man, and God forbid that I should be a slave. I give account alone to my Maker and no mortal shall usurp his place."

"But you have many devoted friends," I said.

"Ah, yes, a multitude which I can scarcely number. They have been drawn to me of their own will, but they remain by *my* will, for I have never lost a friend who was worthy to be counted such."

"Your books are widely read and thereby you gain many friends."

"Yes, that is my greatest pleasure, and if I can do good by persuading a single soul to love the truth simply for itself, and not for its connections with power and favor, and to practice it without fear of any save the One all-powerful, all-searching, I shall be content. Here is a little work which I have just completed," he continued, "it was written long ago, but I wish you to read it and then tell me your convictions of your own duty."

It was a work in manuscript and not designed for publication until after his death. I read it eagerly though carefully, and therefrom a strong, prominent and restless idea arose in my mind. I tried to crush it. I reproached myself with vanity, *unwomanliness* and false ambition, but it would not die. It lived to grow with my growth and strengthen with my strength. More than all things, save heaven and happiness, I wished to become an *author*.

I spoke again to this veteran book maker and he encouraged me. Said he,

"If you write, attempt nothing but what greatly interests yourself, if you wish to create an interest in what you write. To this end let your ideal be drawn from the real with which you are familiar. Invoke your own household gods, draw water from the moss-covered bucket which refreshed your childhood, and copy the models which Nature has placed in profusion around you. If you aspire to write of that which is above you, write of God and heaven and not of fabled fools and follies which have never been or will be. Observe that those writers are generally the most popular and the most useful in reality, who choose their themes from practical men and manners, because they address the heart and not simply the imagination. Everybody is interested in what concerns everybody, but they are *not* interested in what concerns nobody."

I resolved to profit by this counsel, which well

accorded with my inclinations. My success I propose to detail by the aid of a few random memories, and I trust that I shall be pardoned although I am "unhonored and unknown," when it is remembered that almost everything in the way of letters at the present day, appears in the form of "reveries," "recollections," "remini-scences" or "confessions."

My first effort was a tale, and as I wished to follow the advice I had just received, I looked to my own experience for the plot. At last I hit upon my hero—an old bachelor who was noted for being a flirt, a bumpkin and a miser. As he resided some distance from me in the country, and never was known to read anything but the *Daily Spy* and the *Farm Intelligencer*, which he borrowed from his neighbors, I had not the slightest apprehensions of an explosion upon my devoted head. Therefore I did not spare him, but wrought out a certain ridiculous scene in which he had been the chief actor, describing his personal aspect, which was certainly a fair subject to appropriate to my uses, his unsuccessful love-scheme and the overwhelming denouement, "to the best of my ability."

Accordingly I sent it off to a popular literary journal of the day, with a little note of introduction which served the two-fold purpose of abasing myself and exalting the editor, and with anxious expectancy awaited my fate which was to decide my *debut* in the career of letters.

After some delay it was accepted with a very flattering notice, and subsequently appeared as Daniel Lambkin, by his devoted niece, Sally Swamp."

I was entranced with my success, for to behold my thoughts, my words and my graceful *nom de plume* in print, was to me more beautiful, more glorious than ought I could then imagine. I believed that my fate was certain, and I exclaimed,

I thought that I should not only become an author, but a first class one, and that my name should not die with my death, but live to illumine all the ages of coming time. And so I resolved to have a great care of my personal appearance, habits, &c., that they might at all times and in all places be such as were befitting my true character. As I wished to inform my friends with my pseudo genius, I mailed a copy of my story to many of them and circulated it in other ways. I determined to cultivate the acquaintance of the literary and talented, and to drop the recognition of many old friends whom I imagined did not regard me with merited reverence, for the reason that they were wholly incapable of appreciating my real merits.

But the fire of my exaltation was suddenly quenched, for a time at least, by the receipt of the following letter, with a seal covered in black silk, of which I give a true copy attest, as it is one of the most precious relics which I have gathered in Authorland:

"SHEEPCOTE HILL, Feb. 8rd, 18—.

MISS ALLEN—What du yu want to kill me for yu Igrunt consated thing yu. du yu sposse ine jest no body too boude in sich A shamfull way. ile tele yu yure orfully mistakin for ile larn your better maners ime A goin too Prosekute You and that ere editur hoo Printed it and ile horsewhipp Him ta ann luch of his eglstunce and yu Aand him shal paye sass tu the laste farthin. Yu tel bout my kourtin mis blabson coss sheas Rich and thin when she Pretendid too be pure tu leve hur and thin About mis Caul and Mary stacy and Suke Wild I saye thats all a darned confoundid mess of lise as was tould on in the world. and that huckleberry pastor scrape want so by no meense and yu do no it. But the wurst ont is yure ritin sich stuf About me as too sett all the gals a laffin at me and tu mak that rich widder Tuy jockey me rite when I spected tu mary her. Arnte yu shamed of yerself to du so i am and ile du somethin wuss than sham. ile make yu quail like a parht pee in a red hot skillet yu shal sissle ard skorch and ru the day yu rote that peace.

"Yuve lost evry frend yuve gott and yule never bee anythin more off in this wurld or the next which is gest goode enuff for yu and ile Make yure father pony over one gude round summ fort so yule see whatele you git.

"donto you never rite another word for the papers agin nor try to git anythin in print without tis this leter which if you du yu git it printed wurd for wurd and not in yure own shamfull languag as yu hav dun. Youde beter let me alown in futur if yu dont mean to be shot i say beeware! and yu make the moste of it in ceeson for ive gut somethin to do with. ime Rich ile let yu no and ile have reveng. so Beeware.

DANIEL LAMBKIN.

"N. B.—mark well youle feel a feeble humbler i gess when yu git tu here.

D. L."

How can I express the sensations that I experienced when I had concluded this letter! My enthusiasp and ambition had fallen to a freezing point, and I imagined I saw the shadow of mine adversary at every corner of the street, armed to the teeth with a Colt's revolver, a double dagger and a sword cane. I thought I could comprehend something of the emotion which had inspired Sappho when she wrote,

"Thou cleaves my tongue—and subtle flame
Shoots sudden through my tingling frame,
And my dim eyes are fixed, and sound
Of noises hum around."

"Such is the fate of genius!" I cried, "it has been so in all ages, and persecution is an indispensable part in the programme of the life of the truly great and wise. Therefore let me not despair."

Nevertheless I secretly voted the world a ungrateful bore, and likened myself to a city which is set upon the hill and cannot be hid. On comparing notes with most young-authorlings like myself, I find this to be the common prescription to the heart when it is wounded with the barbed arrow of misappreciation.

II.—ANANIAS.

—“She sent her maid to fetch it. And when she opened it she saw the child: and behold the babe wept.”
EXODUS.

I was now weary of drawing plots from real life, not being philosopher enough to savor the idea of being “shot” and “skoroht” and the victim of every imaginable evil.

So, I next became an essayist. My genius did not incline to this style of writing, but I consoled myself by thinking that the staid and wise people would now be my class of readers, instead of the frivolous and light minded. In this line my first effort was an essay upon childhood. I took great pains that it should be elaborate and scholarly, with an occasional ornament of a Latin or Greek quotation, and withal in the spirit of conventional charity for all creation in general, and little dears and babies in particular, concluding with very touching nursery hymns of my own manufacture.

I found it more difficult to get an insertion of an essay than a tale in the newspapers, and I did not aspire to a magazine. But after no little effort I succeeded in getting it admitted into a second-rate sectarian journal, which professed great dignity, and possessed little patronage. The editor and his readers were those who regard it a flagrant error to cast their eyes upon all works of fiction, save Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress, the Shepherd of Salisbury Plain, and a few other works of a kindred nature. I therefore could expect but a very imperfect appreciation, but I solaced myself with the thought that I was now numbered among the chosen few who consider themselves the salt of the earth.

How could I dream of the consequences of this article! How could I count its cost, when I now felt myself as innocent as Lambkin himself? I knew that “great results from little causes rise,” but I did not calculate that I had produced a cause of this description, besides, I considered myself shielded from all apprehension by the sanctity of my theme.

During the week of its publication, I was sitting in our parlor one evening with a group of my choicest spirits, engaged in chatting and reading selections from some new works, when my attention was unusually arrested by the

prolonged flourish of the street door bell. The sound was violent and I trembled involuntarily.

Clara Ashcroft, the dashing, beautiful belle, laughed lightly and exclaimed, “that's a fortunate arrival; its a beau, I'll be bound.”

This prophecy was succeeded by a general sensation, and one or two of the girls ran to the mirror to adjust stray ringlets and disordered collars. Then we all sat down very demurely, and pretended to be deeply absorbed in our books; however, I chanced to observe that my neighbor's attention was in an inverted ratio. We were half expecting some gentlemen, who were brothers, or particular friends to drop in upon us that evening.

Another vigorous jingle of the bell, and we heard the slapping tramp of the housemaid along the hall, then the door opened—but no sound.

“A charming prestige,” said one.

“Its a warning—a spiritual warning to us,” remarked little, blue-eyed Mary Simms, whose marvelous organ predominated over every other, “we should not be so rude when old Mrs. White, who has nursed half of us, lies dead.”

At that moment Bridget appeared, with a scared look, and an ample basket in her hand.

“Oh, Holy Mother!” she cried, in a trembling voice, “as sure as I lave, Miss, there be strange doings here, indade there is. Its soo havery, and its mighty quare to be left withoot anybody with't to say one word at all, at all. Mistres is out, and I don't dare to kape it with me, I'm sure.”

We gathered around the mysterious basket, as she sat it upon the carpet, and a vision of “something vastly new and nice,” quickly floated through my mind.”

The paper was carefully removed from the top, then came thick folds of nice flannel, and my fingers moved unsteadily; the last remove—and a sleeping infant! A beautiful little cherub, with the sweetest of round faces, a pair of long, dark eye-fringes, and two red lips just parted by the angel spirit which had brooded o'er its little dream!

“A real, live baby!” exclaimed we, in a breath, then exchanged smiles, and finally went off in one grand chorus of laughter.

At this hilarious and overwhelming juncture, baby began to nestle, and presently disclosed two large black eyes, which glanced from one to another of us, like scudding stars, but seeking in vain for a familiar face, it donned the most agonizing of infantile expressions, and began to cry at the top of its lungs.

“Poor, dear thing!” said the matronly Miss Julia Hammond, who was the eldest of a family

of "nine children and one at the breast," "come nigh to me, darling, and don't cry."

The girls opened their eyes a shade wider, and contemplated the act of her taking up the baby and folding it to her bosom, in mute amazement.

"Where did it drop from?" said I, in the most miserable of tones.

"It's a joke," observed Clara, "the nurse will follow soon, I am certain."

"That is most devoutly to be wished," said I, "but it is a very darling," I added, as the little creature began to amuse itself with Miss Hammond's chatelaine, "such a perfect little dimpled arm and hand? I shall be almost tempted to do as Esop did with his first-born—hug it to death."

"Ah! what have we here?" exclaimed Mary Simms, as she picked up something from the carpet."

"It's a letter!" cried two or three at once, "which has fallen from the blanket—a letter of introduction, but its directed to you, Anna."

"To me," I exclaimed, in consternation.

"Yes; and now for the solution of the mystery."

With a little squeamishness I unsealed the envelope, and after some demur, read aloud.

"Miss Anna Allen is solicitedly requested to accept the gift accompanying this, for her own, to have and to hold forever. The child is a boy, and will be one year old on the tenth of May next. The mother is not a degraded outcast, but an unfortunate woman, who observing the article upon 'Childhood' in the ———, knows that one who could write thus, will do better for the babe than she can find it in her power to do. God reward and care for the writer, even as she cares for the innocent and unprotected child."

As I concluded, words fell from the lips of my companions like water-drops from the over-freighted clouds of summer-time—words of congratulation, condolence, compassion, consternation, and condemnation, of surprise, sympathy, simplicity; but here the babe cried again, and sobbed as though its little heart was almost broken, and we were still, all but Miss Hammond, who hushed, and trotted, and soothed, and sung a snatch of all the negro melodies she could remember.

At this crisis, the door opened and my mother appeared in hood and shawl, on her return from a meeting of the Union Relief Society. My companions all besieged her *en masse* to inform her of her right to the new title of "grandma." For myself I silently handed her the "letter of introduction," and smiled very faintly.

My mother mother concluded reading the note, and I awaited her words with considerable anxiety.

"Well, Anna," she observed, at last, "what is another's loss is your gain."

"Gain!" repeated I, "what in the world shall I do?"

"As every mother should do, 'train up the child in the way he should go,'" she replied as she directed her steps toward baby.

"Good! Mrs. Allen," exclaimed the girls, clapping their hands.

"Darling creature!" said my mother, caressingly taking it to her arms, "my dear little Ananias!"

"Ananias! what do you mean?" said we.

"My child is called Anna, her child shall be called Ananias," replied mamma, very quietly.

"Dear me!" groaned I, in the bitterness of my spirit, "where is Sapphira?"

"Oh? she will come one of these days—your daughter-in-law, you know," returned Clara Ashcroft, laughing violently.

"Now this is vastly queer," I continued, musingly, "but it all comes of trying to be an author. I think now that I will never write another word again for the public so long as I live."

"Well spoken," my mother said, "I never was in favor of your being a caterer for the public taste. In the first place I do not think you are a genius, and no person without a decided genius should attempt authorship. Besides, I am not in countenance of literary women, for they make themselves unhappy and all who surround them, by aspiring to those honors which do not belong to them. Woman's sphere is emphatically at home, and there only should she emulate the great and wise and good. In thus doing she accomplishes her true mission, and perfects her own happiness by contributing to the happiness of others."

"'Persecution makes power,' you know," I rejoined, "and the very fact of your denying that I have genius, causes me to repent my decision, but I'll not write about children again, I am quite assured."

"And while we are all talking here of ourselves," said mamma, "poor Ananias is crying for something to keep life within him. Come, darling, we will go and see what Bridget has got," and she went off with my hopeful *protégée*, leaving us to the supplement of our confabulations.

The next day it rained violently, but I had to go dripping through the streets for four successive hours in search of a nurse for Ananias, yet when I reflected that it was all the result of my pen, I was compensated. At last I found a

handsome, hale-looking Irish woman, who was very glad to accept my trust, and I soon established her and Ananias in a back chamber of the house, as cosily as possible, where I made two visits of inspection every day of my life.

III.—FALLING IN LOVE.

"Amo
Amas
Amat."

My next episode of existence was the very natural one to young maidens, of falling in love, deeply and blindly. My hero was a student of the neighboring University, who realized all my dreams of manly perfection, notwithstanding he was plain-looking, and rather peculiar in his manners and temperament. He was an earnest student, an earnest enthusiast, an earnest lover, and in short, he was earnest in everything. This made him sanguine to a fault and impatient of contradiction, so that he was generally considered conceited and ill-natured. But I dignified all his follies and faults as the peculiarities of genius, for a real genius I was certain he was.

I believe I should never have thought of loving him had he not flattered me with ingenuity and tact which gratified me immensely. My writings were his especial praise, and he would devote hours to their criticism, which was one unvaried chapter of commendation. This was all so new and so delightful to me, that I admired him above all others, and rated him as vastly superior to any other eligible man of my acquaintance.

My lover, Mr. Augustus Somers, did not write himself, he was only "a devout worshipper of true inspiration," he said, and this was something of a marvel to me. I was quite certain that he *could* write largely and well, if he would, but he did not aspire to that distinction, and whenever I mentioned the matter to him, he betrayed great sensibility and protested with a blush and simper, "that he was not a *genius* like myself."

In my heart I was glad of this, for I liked the solitary distinction which he so much celebrated, and I also surmised that his writings would be a subject of annoyance to me, for I knew that he would be as exacting as a very tyrant.

I had now been a poetaster for some time, in fact ever since I found that I had exchanged my heart for another. Poetry seemed the most fitting medium for my inspiration, in my peculiar state of mind, and I began to frame indefinite hopes of becoming *the* poet-woman of my country.

Whole quires of foolscap were dedicated to the muses in stanzas on "The One Beloved," "The Black Eyes," "The Lock of Hair," "Friendship," "Love," "Spiritual Recognition," &c.

These I contributed to the periodicals, as also occasionally a tale, which plot was invariably drawn from shreds of my experience. I found that I could not forego the pleasure of sarcasm, although in love and under ban of great tribulation. And as I continued to gratify this taste, it grew strongly upon my will, so that nothing but the loud reproofs of my conscience could induce me to spare my best beloved friends. It was passing sweet, even sweeter than love, to pourtray in brilliant and faithful colors, the foibles of everybody in my way. I met with considerable encouragement, notwithstanding my inauspicious beginning. The editors extolled me as my tales brought a great sale for their papers, because a universal interest was created about that *truth* which is stranger than fiction. My friends winked at my sin, which they thought discovered great cleverness and tact—save those, indeed, who came under my lash. And my lover was content, so long as I praised and loved him, even though I attacked the destinies of all the rest of mankind.

Poor little Ananias was almost forgotten in my chase after the phantoms Love and Fame, but I received favorable reports of him from my mother who had assumed my part of the matronly responsibilities, so that I knew that he thrived and waxed stronger every day.

One evening—it was that which followed "Commencement-day," at ——— University, my lover came to me, more in *earnest* than I had ever seen him before. He had graduated with honorable distinction, and he was almost beside himself with conflicting emotions. A long, weary struggle had passed, and successfully, which inspired him with new courage and hope.

I saw it in his step, his air, his eyes, which gleamed in an unwonted brilliance. I felt that his assurance was now doubly sure, and I was half vexed with him.

That night he spoke of love—of *our* love, but I was silent.

He grew more explicit, while I endeavored to waive the subject in every possible manner.

At last I forced my coldness upon his notice, and he was astonished, deeply wounded. His cheek paled and his voice trembled.

"You have not thus lured me on to deceive me, Anna?" he said, searching my soul through my eyes, "*that is not possible; oh, merciful heaven, speak or I perish.*"

"Presumption!" said I, slowly and meaningly.

"Oh, Anna!"

"Be not unreasonable——" I began, with a mischievous smile,

"Talk not to me of reason, when you know

that you have permitted, nay, encouraged me to love you. You taught me to adore you, Anna, and now do you scorn me! do you tell me to be reasonable! As well might you call on the stars to fall——"

"The stars sometimes do fall," said I.

My lover's eyes flashed fire, his lips paled to whiteness, and he grasped my hand till his own was stained with blood.

"Stay," cried I, "you *must* be reasonable, Mr. Somers——Augustus, see, there is blood, my blood upon your hand! How can you act thus? You actually terrify me."

"But do you intend to trifle with me, with my destiny as with every other one? Speak, tell me all and *truly*, now, Anna, as you hope for mercy from heaven," he said.

"Now, Augustus, this is all vastly amusing to me, but it is also rather gratifying than otherwise, for I know that you do love me in truth, and for myself—I can never love any other—but—but—I really would prefer not to tell *now*."

"*Now!*" cried he, vehemently, "*now or never*."

"Well, then if I must, I *must*, I suppose."

"It is?"

"You."

And here, most wisely, the curtain falls!

"But what we do determine, oft we break."

SHAKESPEARE.

A little while after this, Mr. Somers came to me with some new books and a newspaper, in which he said there was a poem dedicated to me in reply to one of mine of earlier date. With his peculiar smile of self-complacency, he asked me to read the poem, and give him the benefit of my opinion of its merits. It was "To my Love, by the Unknown." The opening stanzas convulsed me with laughter, it was so devoid of every element of poetry, and withal such a comic union of the sublime and ridiculous. The following verses, thirteen in number, were not less laughable in my estimation, and I lavished my sarcasm unsparingly upon this loving tribute of the *great Unknown*.

Meanwhile my lover had been poring over the leaves of a book beside me, and I did not observe the effect of my words. I was determined, however, to listen to his criticisms, and so I handed over the poem to him for that purpose.

"Come," said I, merrily, "now you must give the interpretation."

He shook his head, and seemed deeply absorbed in his reading.

I was about to vigorously remonstrate, when the door opened and two of my young lady friends were announced—Clara Ashcroft and her sister.

"In the right time," cried I, after the first salutations, "here is a poem addressed to me by some unknown swain, which is just the most ridiculous production you ever saw. I have been laughing over it for the last half hour."

"What! the poem in the Daily——?" glancing curiously from me to Augustus.

"The very same," said I.

"And you, Anna, make merry of *that*! Impossible!" continued Clara, opening her eyes in profound astonishment.

"Why not?" I asked, "you surely cannot know what I refer to."

"Is there not one verse like this?" said Clara Ashcroft.

"My love is beauteous as an elf,
Her eyes are all a-twitching,
There is none fairer than herself,
Alas! she's most bewitching!"

and again, is there not this," she continued, in mock gravity—

"As stars that shoot in majesty
So does my star shoot through my soul,
I wound—I fall upon the tapestry,
Beneath her eyes cerulean roll."

"Yes, indeed, that is it," I replied, "it is just the most stupid, the most ridiculous and the most intolerable poetry I ever saw in my life. I would give a round sum to know the name of the author."

"And what would you do then?" said Clara, looking uncomfortably mysterious.

"I would dub him a Knight of the Grand Order of Don Quixote, and request him to select some other inamorata than myself."

"Well, I suppose that I can tell you his name," pursued Clara, glancing mischievously at Somers.

"You cannot?" said he, rising to his feet with passion—furiously angry passion upon his face.

I was overwhelmed with surprise. My consternation was only equalled by his wrath. I knew that Clara was no friend to Somers, and could she mean *him*? my lover that author? I trembled like an aspen. He had been silent—preoccupied, and was it for this? Good heavens! what a mistake, and before Clara Ashcroft, the most independent belle of the town, the most provoking, mirth-loving of all wicked spirits, and the most determined that I should not love Mr. Somers, whom she had called "a stupid, intolerable bore!"

"I believe the author has confessed himself to several persons," persisted Clara.

Mr. Somers advanced to the door with hurried, nervous strides.

"Do not go now, Augustus," I stammered,

"it was nothing—it shall be nothing, but a clever *jeu d'esprit*."

But he vanished like a ghost of a forlorn hope, without a single word of explanation.

"How could you, Clara?" said I, when we were alone, "you have wounded him sorely."

"No, no," said she, laughing violently, "you have killed him; you have shot through his soul, you know."

"Oh! alas! for me, and the Unknown!" groaned I, "how stupid that I did not hold my peace before it was too late. I did not even mistrust his claim to those wretched, execrable verses. How in all the world did the editor accept them for publication?"

"That's the best of it," said Clara, "my brother, you know, is quite familiar with Mr. S——, the editor, and he says that Somers paid a large sum for their insertion, *after they were rejected!*"

That self-same eventful day, I received a package from Mr. Augustus Somers, containing all my letters, and a note from himself, requesting his own from me, with an additional explanation involved in two words—"unpardonable sarcasm!"

IV.—THE REV. ADONIJAH GOODENOW.

"We cannot reproach the cruel fates for what we bring upon our own heads." SENZEA

NOTWITHSTANDING my adverse fortune in love and fame, I was soon consoled by another love, which I learned was far more in earnest than my former one. Before, my hero had been a perfect man; now, he was a god! I congratulated myself on my escape from Augustus Somers, and how did I rejoice in the possession of such a heart as throbbed the breast of the Rev. Adonijah Goodenow!

We fell mutually in interest at church. Mr. Goodenow was preaching a charity sermon in behalf of the "Young Ladies' Dorcas Society," from the text—"She stretcheth out her hand to the poor. Favor is deceitful, and beauty is vain: but a woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised."

A portion of the discourse I did not like, because it was a direct reproof to all such vain-glorious girls as myself, and so I grew inattentive and worldly. I criticised the trimmings of several new hats, and planned the entire plot of a story, but still he held on to the horns of his message.

At last a couple of urchins, (I remember them well, one was red-haired, the other white,) began to play with their buttons, and to whisper loudly. They sat just in the slip before me, without any

older person to superintend them. They grew wild, and attracted general notice. I saw several persons looking toward them, and I knew that one ancient maiden sinned greatly by coveting a lock of hair from each of their heads, her fingers actually trembled, so strong was this impulse in her heart.

At last they looked around, and I succeeded in gaining their attention. I shook my bonnet at them, and rolled up my eyes, and pursed my lips, into a whole volume of reproof, then I fixed my attention upon the preacher, for an example to them. I saw that the Rev. Adonijah Goodenow had observed me. He looked benignly upon me, and repeated, "she shall be praised." I was conscious of blushing deeply, but still I fastened my eyes upon him, though I did not retain a word of his remarks longer than the moment of utterance. I fancied, too, that in the grand circuit of his gaze upon his audience that his eyes fell upon me often, indeed, too often to escape my notice.

How did I inwardly bless those mischievous boys who had brought me such a pleasure, and I devoutly hoped that they would give me such another opportunity of winning the golden opinion of the minister.

The next day, the Rev. Adonijah Goodenow called upon me, as I was one of the officers of the Dorcas Society. I exerted myself to entertain him by talking all the theology I ever knew in my life; I repeated Scripture, and I gave him the result of my own cogitations. He conversed well, and was evidently pleased with himself and me. After a number of indefinite intimations of his departure, he arose to leave, but I pressed him so hard to remain for the afternoon, that he consented with a little show of reluctance.

Then I brought in mamma, and subsequently Ananias and his nurse, to contribute to his entertainment. He received my mother with the most profound attention, and when he saw Ananias, he took him in his arms, and protested that he loved children above all things else which were temporal. He kissed him many times, and loudly, and then handed him over to me to kiss, which I of course was sure to do in the same spots as nearly as possible.

After this, he talked with mamma about the missionaries, the education of daughters, and the wives and mothers of America, during which colloquy I pretended to be engaged with Ananias, and my crotchet work, but I stole frequent glances toward our guest, and somehow, they were always sure to meet his. I saw that he was speaking to mamma, but at me, which flat-

tered me and made me prink up as much as possible.

I had leisure, however, to observe his personal appearance, I was afraid that he was on the shady side of forty, and I knew that he must be either an old bachelor or a widower, but he had no wife I was certain, by the way he appeared toward me, and also by the state of his linen and buttons. His face was large and open in expression, especially when he conversed, as his mouth was remarkably generous in its dimension. His eyes likewise were very large and of a peculiarly benign expression, with an occasional shade of fire. His forehead was broad and towering, and was surrounded with dark, curling hair which betrayed a few silver threads.

All this pleased me, but his height was certainly no desideratum, as he was at least calculation, six feet and five inches, while I was precisely four and a half, but mamma pointedly said, as she did of Ananias, "what was my loss, was his gain."

As the afternoon waned, I arose and excused myself to the Rev. Mr. Goodenow, saying, that my domestic duties demanded my absence, and that I would make ready to minister to the wants of the body, while he and mamma should attend to those of the soul. He smiled and said, that he thought I must be a Martha who cared for much serving. I exchanged one glance with my mother, who looked a volume of reproof, and so I took myself off with Ananias and his nurse.

When I got well out of sight and hearing, I played merry like mad, for I had no more to do with our kitchen than one of our neighbors. Nevertheless, to be truthful, I ordered the tea, unleavened bread, ice cream, wild honey, sponge cake and cold tongue, and took pains myself, to announce when all was ready. Mr. Goodenow seemed very much gratified with my domestic propensities, and praised my appointments lavishly, which I received with becoming modesty.

He remained quite late in the evening, and as papa was absent, we were all very glad of his company. For myself, I was now more than half in love with him, and thought him the noblest specimen of humanity that I had ever met. At parting he pressed my hand and promised to drop in as often as possible, although his parish was some ten miles away.

Not long after this, I caught a sudden cold and was ill of a fever for several weeks. Affliction sobered me and made me humble and repentant. I regretted the frivolity and faults of my past life, and began to think in earnest of the course which I was pursuing. I thought

too, that I might die, and I felt that I was illy prepared for such an event. Then Mr. Goodenow came to me, and spoke holy words of consolation, and of heaven and happiness, which were as a balm to my aching heart.

I grew stronger with good resolutions for the future, and I regarded all my past pleasures very differently from ever before. Not that I wholly discarded them, but I made them secondary and subservient in my heart to higher duties and interests.

I was no longer proud, sarcastic and bitter against all those whose habits and tastes did not accord with mine, but I loved everybody in peace and humility, and if I was proud of anything, it was of the friendship of the excellent Mr. Goodenow, who manifested the most generous interest in my welfare.

When I recovered, he told me his love, and I was grateful and happy. We were betrothed with the approbation of all our friends, who only wondered that he ever thought of marrying, as he had lived to his thirty-ninth year, a single man. This was in the spring, and it was arranged that our marriage should occur in the following autumn.

Time passed rapidly and pleasantly. I looked forward to my prospect in life with quiet happiness, and trusted that I was safely anchored from all the perilous shoals which I had passed.

It was about midsummer, when my engagement was very generally known, that an event occurred which suddenly produced one of those episodes which colors the fate of a life.

I received an anonymous letter, which overwhelmed me with consternation, mortification, and profound sorrow.

I read—"The man whom you are about to wed for your partner through life, is none other than the natural father of the child which was left at your door on the night of the nineteenth of December. You may doubt it, but it is nevertheless as true as that gospel which he preaches," and I fainted and remained senseless I know not how long.

When I recovered my consciousness I felt that a work of years had passed over me.

I was the victim of doubt, fear and grief. I did not wholly believe this statement, but I could not dispossess myself of its awful, overwhelming omnipresence. I recalled every circumstance in my memory which could lighten my sorrow, and a thousand times I resolved to forget everything and press forward in love and hope, but as often would I fall back upon that dark suspicion, and my heart would die within me.

For a week I remained in solitary thought, and those long, dark, miserable days and nights I shall never forget; they haunt me now, with all their tears, and words, and resolutions, like a troop of spectres.

When I came forth again before the world, I was calm, oh! how strangely calm! and I was *resolved!*

Mr. Goodenow received the message which dissolved our connection with a sorrow which seemed inconsolable. He requested my reasons, but these I could not give to any living being. It was the nine days wonder of the world who knew us, and my own family thought that I had lost my senses.

I lost no time in leaving home for a long visit in the country, and soon after my departure, I heard that Mr. Goodenow had sailed for Italy for the benefit of his health.

After a long and weary pilgrimage in search of forgetfulness of the past, and hope for the future, I began to pine once more for the sight of my old home. I had been absent nearly two years, and it was a blessed thought—a return to the scenes of my past joys and sorrows, where I could extract a balm of consolation and hope which could be derived from no other source.

I found the face of all things nearly as I had left it—some changes, indeed, but such as startled no fond memory in my heart.

I asked my mother after old friends.

She said there had been few events of importance—marriages, one or two deaths, and some removals, of which I had been duly apprised by letter.

"What is the latest intelligence from Mr. Goodenow?" I inquired, with a strong effort.

My mother shook her head sadly, while the

tears gathered in her eyes. My heart trembled with an indefinite fear.

"Only last week," she said, "his friends heard that he had taken passage for home, but in consequence of a sudden storm, the vessel was wrecked, in sight of land, and among those who perished, was your old lover! Oh! Anna!"

I did not reply; I could not have spoken if the fate of worlds had depended upon my words. I hurried to my old room, and there I wept, unseen and alone.

Well would it have been for my heart's peace, if I had not been forced to add the bitterness of *remorse* to that of doubt and sorrow. But it was not so to be. The dregs of the cup of bitterness were yet to be drained.

A few days later, and I received a letter, which consummated the poignancy of my misfortunes. It was from Daniel Lambkin, and in the same miserable manner which he had before written to me. He informed me that he had now his revenge, that he had hired the letter written which had sealed the fate of my lover, and that without the slightest foundation in truth—and now he was dead, and I was punished for the wrong I had done himself and others!

I was indeed punished. Oh! how surely and fearfully!

Years have come and gone since then, and I am now what the world calls an old maid; but, strange as it may seem, I have still that unhappy *pendant* for literary distinction which has proved the great evil of my life. This day I received some of the proof of a work I have now in process of publication, the incidents of which are principally founded upon real life, and its leading sentiment is—"never say die!"

THE NEW YEAR'S GIFT.

BY J. R. A. BONE.

"TO-MORROW will be the last day of the old year," remarked the young and handsome Mrs. Harmon to her husband, as they sat at breakfast. "I hope, my dear, you have fixed on a nice New Year's present for me."

Mr. Harmon pushed back his chair and looked abstractedly in the fire, as if matters of more weight than New Year's gifts were passing in his mind.

His young wife did not observe his inattention, but continued her remarks.

"I saw a magnificent shawl in Page's to-day, and so cheap too—positively, they only asked ninety dollars for it! Would you have believed it? They have rich cloaks too; one—but I will leave it all to your own choice. I know you will be sure to give me an elegant present."

"Hum—yes—the thirtieth to-day?" observed her husband, as if awakening from a reverie. Smith's note falls due to-day, and that draft of a thousand to-morrow. Dear—dear—how the time flies."

"Going to office so early? I have several things to arrange with you about our party next week, and, you know, I must get some more money from you to procure dresses and various articles. Well, if you must go now we will talk it over in the evening. Good-bye, mind the day after to-morrow is New Year's day."

Mr. Harmon took his way to office in a very thoughtful mood. He had been married about ten months, and during that time his domestic peace had been undisturbed by a single breeze, and yet, for the latter part of the time he had been anything but a happy man. A cloud hovered over his spirits, and the cloud gathered density every day.

When he married, he was a merchant in a fair way of business. His wife was taken from the upper circles, and was consequently accustomed to gaieties and luxuries to which he had been a stranger. He could not, however, find it in his heart to induce her of anything to which she had been accustomed, and so he kept up an expensive style of living, utterly unsuited to his means. He had given his wife two thousand dollars on their wedding day, and the extravagant expenditure of his household being added to this, soon crippled his resources. Latterly he had

become painfully conscious of his downward course, and he was more aware of it on that December morning, when he found a note due and hardly a possibility of meeting it. He had determined frequently for the last two months to look into his affairs, but never could summon sufficient resolution to face the dreadful array of figures and facts. On this day he determined to set about it in earnest.

He directed the book-keeper to draw up a statement of the position of the business, and then he proceeded to cast around for means to pay the note. Eventually this was accomplished, and the evil day put off.

That night there was a torrent of playful questions poured on him as to the nature of the intended present, and his pretty wife guessed and wondered what it could be that he kept so secret and appeared so grave about it.

The next day the book-keeper handed Mr. Harmon the balance-sheet. The first glance at it struck a chill to his heart. He passed into his private room, and placing the paper on the table, sat down and looked at it as if it were a deadly serpent. At last he summoned his courage, and with a countenance rigid as marble, went through all the withering details. There was no error—no miscalculation. The book-keeper had performed his task but too correctly, and had stated in incontrovertible figures that the merchant was—ruined! Hopelessly, irretrievably ruined.

He clenched his fingers in his hair, and, resting his elbows on the table, glared on the document as if he would have burnt out the figures with his fiery looks. Then the thought of his wife came, and he bowed his head down and wept like a child.

He felt so thoroughly miserable as he turned toward home that evening, that he dreaded to meet his wife, but fortunately, she was out visiting and had not returned. Hastily despatching his meal he again went to his office to brood over the evidence of his ruin and to consider if there were no means of averting it.

When Mrs. Harmon returned and discovered her husband's departure, she smiled, and, concluding that he had gone to purchase the present for the morning, thought no more of it.

Night wore on, but the spirit-broken man still

sat in his office, his head resting on his hands, with the fatal document extended on the table between his elbows. His eyes were riveted to the one item that showed him to be a beggar. A current of bitter reflections was passing rapidly through his mind.

"To-morrow, and the whole city will know it. My clerks know it already and are talking of it among their friends. A day or two and the creditors will be swarming around my doors. And Lydia will know it—will know that the husband she supposed so rich is penniless and in debt. Will she not turn from me in scorn? Will she not say I have deceived her, and then leave me for the home of her parents? Oh, God! if I am to be deserted by all it will certainly kill me."

Then followed another reverie, at the end of which he started up, with somewhat more of determination than he had evinced since his knowledge of his fall.

"I must tell her. There is no other course. The blow must come, and it will come better from me than from my enemies."

It was after midnight when he reached home, and his wife was in bed and asleep. He silently lay down and endeavored to gain a little slumber, but failed. Then he got up and paced around the garden until morning. He did not enter the house until the breakfast-bell rang, and then it was with a firm step as that of a man who has a disagreeable duty to perform and who has mustered all his energies to the task.

"Frederick, where were you last night?" said his wife, reproachfully. "I was in terror for your safety; where have you been?"

"Looking for a fitting New Year's gift," he answered, with a forced smile. "It is here," and he laid the folded balance-sheet somewhat forcibly on the table.

"What is that—great Heavens! what has happened?" she exclaimed, in terror at his strange looks and actions.

"Look at it. See; it means that I am ruined—ruined! It means that I am no longer a wealthy merchant, but a beggar!"

She turned deathly pale at his violence, but did not shriek or faint as he expected she would do. The suddenness of the catastrophe seemed to give her strength.

"This paper——?" She partly opened it and looked at him for an explanation.

"That is the proof of my ruin—the balance-sheet of my business."

She sat down with a calmness that utterly confounded him, and proceeded to examine the particulars of the account, at times calling on him for an explanation of the items. When she finished, she inquired of him how much was required to set him straight with his creditors.

"It would take some five thousand dollars to pay my debts, and then we should be left penniless."

She left the room without another word, and shortly returned with a slip of paper which she handed to him.

"There is my New Year's gift—a truly acceptable one, I flatter myself."

"Lydia—this money—what is it?"

"Those are bills for the two thousand dollars you gave me on our wedding day. I did not want it, so laid it aside. We must sell this house with its costly furniture, dismiss our array of servants, and take a neat cottage and one girl. After paying your debts there will then be a balance with which you can begin business again. We will live economically, but comfortably. I do delight in a small cottage, and I shall have the household affairs to attend to, which is so much more pleasant than receiving or paying idle visits, and we shall get along much more happily than in this great unwieldy and uncomfortable mansion."

"My dear Lydia, how can I ever repay——?"

"Let's say no more about it. You must be up and doing; and remember for the future that I am a partner in your business as well as your domestic life. See that I am not kept in ignorance of anything that passes, and I'll undertake that you shall never again have occasion to present me with such a New Year's gift as that of to-day."

DREAMS AND REALITIES.

BY SALLIE A. CLARENCE.

I.—THE DREAMERS.

"These two, a maiden and a youth, were there.
Gazing—the one on all that was beneath
Fair as herself—but the boy gazed on her."

NIGHT folded earth's weary children under her robe of darkness, and thousands of restless spirits in a great city were stilled in slumber. But there were two who waked to watch for the rising moon while others slept; two on whose cheeks yet lingered the bloom of youth, and over whose heads few summers had passed. So a stranger would have said, to see them for the first time standing out in that portico, their forms relieved against the silvery sky.

One was a youth, with a manly form, a broad, high forehead, an eagle eye, and a proud, yet beautiful mouth. You felt instinctively that this was a spirit born to command. His arm rested caressingly round the slight, girlish form beside him, and his eyes beamed on her with brotherly affection. Yet she looked so frail that you wondered at his imprudence in permitting her to linger in the baleful influence of a southern night dew.

The two were cousins, as you would guess from the faint resemblance; for the same soft, brown tresses floated on either cheek, the same fire flashed from her eyes, and that fraternal embrace would be scarce permitted to a stranger. They had been promenading the gallery for hours, talking eagerly of some all-absorbing subject, and but now paused to watch that rising moon.

"To-morrow, then, we part," said the girl.

"Yes, to-morrow, Agness, you return to your home, to reign again as fashion's queen, to flirt and dance, and break a hundred hearts as you would fain have broken mine. I know that you will rejoice to go back."

"It is useless, George, to combat your prejudices. My bare assertion of a different purpose will not convince you; I leave that work to time. But, you, George, I have more faith in you. I will trust, ere many months, to hear of you in your official capacity, and that you have not been idle; and I will look forward to your filling the highest offices in a few years, and with credit."

"You feel that certainty, Agnes, because I am

entering life, my course yet to choose, and with no other inclination. So you must not blame me, cousin, if I do not yield equal credence to your wise resolutions, for your habits were fixed, your associations formed, your natural disposition devolved long ago."

Agnes sighed, and answered without reference to herself, "you must not forget, dear George, that my sympathies are enlisted in your success. You must think of me often, George, and when you bear your blushing honors thick upon you, write to Cousin Agnes."

"Being the sole representative of a proud name, having the ambition of so many to gratify, is a weighty task, and more, I sometimes fear, than I can ever accomplish. If there were but another son to bear these honors, I would indulge my constitutional indolence, and leave glory to him. But as it is, I am determined to succeed, and to press forward till even *your* insatiable aspirations say enough."

"Yes, George, our hopes all centre in you—not because you are the only son, but because you have those talents and principles which justify our exalted ambition."

"And often, Agnes, you will come to the statesman's home, (for I will have a domestic hearth,) and lend your versatile talents to our tea-table talk, and cheer our quiet evenings. What glorious times those will be! And my fair lady, (as I intend her to be,) will love her cousin for her own sake, and welcome her for mine."

Poor Agnes' lip quivered when he alluded to his future bride, but she answered quietly,

"So you think now, dear George, while bright anticipation lends its rose color to that far distant future. But let that future come! The faded, querulous, old maid, with her moral strictures on society, her disagreeable reminiscences of other days, and her everlasting pen and ink, will be sadly out of place in your world of proprieties and elegance."

"Pshaw! Agnes, I can never fancy you, who are so faultless in dress, metamorphosed into a slovenly, blue stocking, with cap awry, untidy hair, and those fair hands all spotted with ink, rushing unceremoniously from our social circle to the writing-desk to note some beautiful thought, or some new idea. And then an old

maid! No, never, Agnes. If you once give up flirting you'll be a bride in six months: such is my prophecy."

"You are right, Cousin George, as to the dress and hair, but I cannot answer for the ink spots, you might find them to-morrow."

"So you persist in becoming an authoress."

"I am certainly resolved to withdraw from my present profitless associations. To apply myself closer to study than ever, and to endeavor, while making an effort to improve myself, to benefit my fellow-beings."

"It seems strange, almost sad, to hear a young girl at twenty renounce the world; yet your's is a noble undertaking, and I wish you success. But it grows late, Agnes, and we must part, sweet cousin. Let us often think of each other in our different paths, and cherish the affection we now feel."

He folded her to his breast, pressed one fraternal kiss upon her lips, and was gone, little thinking that he then turned from the fondest, truest heart that ever beat for him; from the love that would have brightened the pathway of life, and rendered his sensitive spirit impervious to the shafts of malignity and ingratitude.

And thus the one left his home, confidently looking for the fulfilment of his dream; while the other, with the pangs of unrequited love rending her heart, turned away with disgust from her accustomed round of pleasure and fashionable dissipation; for oh! her dream had been already too rudely broken. It but remained to hide the blight that had fallen on her hopes. She too, disappeared, and was no more seen in her former world of gaiety.

II.—REALITY.

"And many leaves, once fair and gay,
From youth's full bloom have passed away—
But as these looser leaves depart
The less'n'd flower gets near the core,
And, when deserted quite, the heart
Takes closer what was dear of yore—
And yearns to those who loved it first—
The sunshine and the dew by which its bud was nursed."

THERE was a little cottage, deep down in a sheltered nook, where the mellowed sunlight stole lovingly through the opening trees upon its vine-clad porch, warming the young flowers to life and gladness. The bird's song had a murmuring tone, the flower's breath stole upon the senses lulling, and this humble dwelling seemed the abode of peace.

Not often came to this cottage the world's peculiar children; the echoes slumbered undisturbed by whirling carriage wheels, and never entered from the outer world its contests, hopes,

ambitions or despair, to disturb the repose of its inmate. The world forgetting, and by the world forgot, here dwelt one of heaven's ministers—a loving, Christian woman.

Open the door softly. Do you see her there, sitting by the half-open window, unmindful of the scene without, gazing dreamily on vacancy, as if in the invisible air she saw pictures of stormier or wilder scenes? Yes, there is memory in that mournful smile, and the dirge of youth in that low-breathed sigh. Would you have me draw her portrait? Well, I will shadow its outline, and let fancy fill the sketch.

The form is slight and flexible, like to the trailing jessamine about the porch; and sweet as that jessamine's perfume is the heart breathing in that face. The face is plain. Years are on the broad brow, and time's fingers have left their trace on the features, which beauty disdained to mould to a classic grace. Yet those eyes have a deep, loving light undimmed by the hand of time. Look through those "windows of the soul" down into the pure heart, and you read courage, patience and content. That spirit, like a stream, moves on with steady current toward the shore, where time's boundaries disappear in eternity, bearing upon its bosom the record of a quiet conscience, and its depths illuminated by the sure hope of a better rest beyond the grave. Soft, smooth bands of light brown hair, a simple muslin dress, a little foot peeping out beneath the flowing skirt, and a thin, white hand supporting the faded cheek: she is before you. After all it is but an old maid.

Yes, reader—a neat, plain, old maid. How like you the picture? Bright, joyous girl, queen of hearts and leader of the fashion, don't turn away in disgust from my heroine; for down the vista of the past the old maid sees a thronging crowd of worshippers, and her own fair self moving to the violin's notes as brilliant as thou. Happy thou, if the future bring to thy restless soul as holy calm as her's! Happy if thy guardian angel win thee with like thoughts of duty from this waste of life, to rest on the sure anchor of peace with God! But these pictures from the past have deepened the shadow on her face, and one single tear falls, to tell that these things have been; but that sad sigh was wrong from her by the memory of her one love-dream. Then come brighter pictures to chase away the shadows and recall the gentle smile.

The cottage door opens softly again, and into its atmosphere of purity comes another traveller half way down the path of life. "Oh, weary heart! thou'rt half way home!"

It is a noble form that darkens the doorway,

and as he pauses to note the cheerful, yet humble look of the room, we may draw his portrait too. His form is large, proudly erect, one which had moved with a firm tread in senatorial halls, and his voice had spoken oft to eager ears the sentiments of patriotism and honor which fired his own breast. This man from the noisy, turbulent world without, the dweller in cities, what doeth he here?

"Can the long fever of the heart be cooled
By a sweet breath from Nature?"

His own lips will tell you of his purpose. In the features of the two are a faint resemblance, but on his brow are the deep wrinkles of care and thought; in his eye is the glance that reads men's souls while shutting up his own; and around his lips linger no loving smiles but a heart weariness that appeals painfully to your sympathy. Yes, he had a yearning desire for rest, but not a touch of shame mingled with the weary, weary look.

Reader, have you not recognized in this faded woman, and this care-worn man, the two dreamers? Taking in slowly the belongings of that pleasant chamber, and seeing the still dreaming woman before him, he steps forward, and in a voice, whose cadence tells all the long love of years, says,

"Agnes!"

She springs forward with a cry of joy, and sinks into the outstretched arms *so trustfully*. Yes, the drooping lily is laid upon a sheltering bosom. The fragile creeper has found a sturdy oak around which to twine its tendrils. He leads her to the window seat, and they sit down, his arms still enfolding her, and her head nestling on his shoulder. Surely that had been its resting-place in that picture of the past.

"George," she says, "I always felt that you would come, and all this evening a presentiment has haunted me of some startling event approaching me. Old memories have been busy about my heart, and but now I thought of you."

"Yes, Agnes, the world-worn seeker after happiness has come to lay his burthen on your spirit, and prays you for a little of the old, kind love, the well-remembered words of counsel."

"Dear George, it is no burthen, but a happy privilege to soothe and restore you. But it is long since you wrote, and you have never written confidingly. Tell me now, George, what has been your success in the search for happiness?"

"Ten years ago we parted, Agnes. Ten years that have stolen lightly over your head, scarce leaving a record of their passing. But they have traced the record of their events on my heart, cutting down like the graver's tool in

marble, wearing into my stubborn soul, destroying youth's alluring dreams, and crushing each fond hope, till nought is left but the fiercer passions of mature manhood, and the craving void of unsatisfied affection."

"George, this is saddening; but, had fortune crowned your wishes, you might have forgotten God, 'He doeth all things well.'"

"Perhaps it is so," he answered, gloomily. "But you asked me for a sketch of my chase after that phantom, happiness. Listen, Agnes, and in your own peaceful heart, you will thank God, that you early forsook the world. I went forth ten years ago—ambition my mistress, and love my evening dream. My ambition was gratified. You told me then that I had talents, and that I was destined for great deeds: perhaps so. At least I was plunged into the stormy conflicts of political life, and rose rapidly over older and wiser men. My public career I kept you informed of, and you know how my pride has been gratified even to satiety. Yet even here I have met occasional ingratitude and false accusations. These I did not heed. Thanks to the lessons of my childhood, my sense of moral obligation was clear and acute, thanks to your gentle monitions that first image of purity was never dimmed by the breath of political allurements. But, wherever ambition led me, my soul pined for woman's love, and her companionship had a temptation for me greater than honor or fame. So I haunted every scene brightened by woman's presence, and found many a vase of rare workmanship, but none without a flaw. It would weary me to recount and you to hear the story of my disappointments. In courtly Europe, in our land of equality, in palace and in cottage, I have often found woman gloriously beautiful, yet my heart turned unsatisfied from all. What was it that my soul yearned for? Was it a being faultless from the hand of God? No, Agnes, 'twas that I had mirrored all unconsciously thy image, and ever after refused to reflect another. But I knew not this. Disappointment sickened me. Saddened, cynical, misanthropic, I loathed my kind; and then stole upon me the picture you had painted of your 'bird's nest,' and forsaking my unsatisfying pursuits I am here."

A tear of sympathy trickled through Agnes' slender fingers, and he felt the fond heart pressing closer to his own. After a moment of sad musing, he asked, clasping the little hand,

"And thy search, Agnes—what of it?"

"The budding of my hopes and their blighting belongs to an earlier period, before we parted, and you know my youth's history."

"Yes, Agnes, I know the outer life, but what of the under current, what of thy soul in girlhood, that traced its fierce conflicts on your brow more legibly than time's passing is written there now?"

"Alas! George, these memories you would waken are very saddening. Yet it is well at times to recall the unsatisfactory nature of earthly pleasure in order to appreciate my happy home. Those pictures from the past have no fanciful colorings, such as are given to dreams of the future; but stripped of every enchantment, stand stern mementoes of my youth. They are sentinels to turn me from temptation, and preserve me in the way of truth. I began my life-experience much earlier than you. Both of us were fired by ambition, and pining for love; but my ambition was merely to be distinguished, to be flattered and admired. This was gratified, and I lived upon the incense of praise, blind to all nobler pursuits, the *belle esprit* of a fashionable set, the ruling star of our little world. Triflers of the same stamp professed to admire, and sometimes loved; but I turned with disgust from such love, yearning for one pure heart's tenderness. Between myself and associates there was at first no unity, for my intellectual vision had been opened to the perception of better and nobler aims in life; but I gradually descended to their level, eradicating every germ of better purposes, until we were one in hopes and ambition. When I had grown world-wise and sick of such triumphs, I met such a being as I had dreamed of years before. Then, in an instant, awoke each slumbering principle, and lofty aspiration, that years had crusted over with worldly rust; and as this fresh, pure heart unfolded to my eye, every pulse of my own awoke with the intense limitlessness of woman's first, last love. The sentiment had slumbered with me until reason was fully matured; this gave to my love tenfold force. But time had engraved upon my brow lines of worldly experience which repelled him, and while he loved me, with the full, unreserved affection of a brother, he could not dream of the real sentiments he inspired. Often he sat, with his arm encircling me, talking of the untried future, and appealing to my maturer judgment; for he was my cousin. When I found that my dream of love was futile, I urged him on to ambition: I succeeded. His name went before the people, and they willingly gave their suffrages to the noble representative of an illustrious name. Ten years ago we parted: he to learn of the future his destiny, I with mine suffered and completed. I turned with loathing now from the memory of late habits and associa-

tions, and began courageously the work of reform; uprooting errors and correcting the habits of years. Since then all has been peace."

"Yes, but whence comes that peace? I can not understand that transformation, because it would argue a change of nature. When we were daily together I remarked in you a constant restlessness and desire of change. You were never content, always seeking some new object of interest; truly,

"As variable, as the shade
By the light quivering aspen made."

"You are right, George, and when we parted I yielded tumultuously to grief; but over the waste of years came the voice of a mother's prayer, and after the first wild burst of passion, I prayed also; prayed for rest—for death. At last the dove of peace came and folded its wings upon my bosom. I left the world resolutely, and forever. Shutting myself up here with books and nature, I prayed and studied until the lesson of submission was fully learned, and I listened calmly to the echoes of your greatness."

She paused, and then resumed,

"At last I longed for sympathy with my kind, and began to breathe to them, under a fictitious name, the lessons of my lonely hours. Then came to me their praises, and I joyed in my hiding-place that they could not penetrate my disguise: for, oh! I knew well what the sweet breath of flattery can do. My roof is a humble one, yet it freely shelters every suffering wayfarer, and God has given me a mite to spare the poor—and that 'peace that passeth understanding' is with me, night and day, better than palaces or glittering pageantries."

"And now, Agnes, will that peace-branch still bloom above your door, sheltering with the old love, the world's child in its shadow? Can your heart glide as serenely in its accustomed channel, and yet cherish your first fond dream? Will you be mine, Agnes?"

"Dear George, more proudly now than in the spring time of life."

"We have both of us suffered, Agnes, and can cheerfully renounce the world, to dwell in the sweet solitude of 'Bird's Nest.'"

"Nay, George, such is not your duty. As a suffering, lonely woman, I might fly hither to hide my grief, and also to avoid temptations which I was too weak to resist: but *you* owe it to your fellow beings to mingle with them and endeavor to benefit all within your influence. A Christian dare not bury himself in seclusion, to avoid such things as wound his sensitive spirit; for we are commanded to 'let our light so shine

that it may be seen by all that are in the
house.'"

and to show that "whom He loveth He chasteneth."

Here we leave them, for our purpose was but
to narrate one of the every day incidents of life,

Would that all who suffer from affliction could
perceive "the silver lining to the cloud."

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LOVE AND FAME.

BY E. W. DEWEES.

NEVER did golden flecks of sunlight flutter through greener leaves, to cushion themselves on greener, softer moss, than that which covered the broad, flat overhanging rock by the brookside, whither I would conduct my reader. It was a spot of sweet, wild loveliness, where the eye revelled in beauty, and the murmurs of the rapid creek, the swaying of the forest trees, and the warbling of the wild birds reached the delighted ear in most harmonious strains.

Nor were eyes and ears wanting to enjoy the pleasures Nature seemed to delight in offering. The gnarled root and trunk of an old pine had twisted themselves into a rude kind of arm-chair, and seated in this rustic seat was a young lady of a rare and lofty beauty. Her hands were busy with some woman's work, but her air was that of an enthroned queen. At her feet, stretched on the moss, a youth half reclined, whose sad and delicate features inspired those who gazed on them with almost painful interest. All the marks of genius were stamped on that intellectual face, and his eye beamed with its light; but there, too, might be observed the tokens of constitutional delicacy which so often accompany rare mental endowments, and which seems to warn mankind to cherish tenderly, if they would not lose, their most gifted ones.

An open book lay on the moss beside the youth. He had apparently been reading aloud to his companion; but in weariness or disgust the volume had been thrown aside, and now his eager eyes were reading a page of deeper interest—they were fixed on the young girl's face, and various tell-tale expressions were sweeping over his own countenance. First ardent, impassioned love glowed there, then a look of sadness and humility, which again was banished by a glance of energy and triumph; but finally the flush on his cheek paled, and with an expression of weakness and depression his head sunk between his hands, and his whole attitude became one of the deepest dejection—almost despair. The young girl's eyes rested on him, sadly—lovingly.

"Ralf!" she said, gently, after a few moments.

The youth looked up, eagerly.

"Pray go on—read me something more."

"There is nothing here of interest," replied the youth, resuming the book, "nothing you would like—yet stay—here is a little tale, a trifle, I have never read you—will you have it?"

The young lady assented, and Ralf read as follows:

"In the days of the Crusades, an old knight dwelt all alone in his old ancestral castle. His wife had died in his youth, and thenceforth the knight had dwelt apart from men, a gloomy, disappointed man. An only child, his son, shared his solitude, but not his heart. He was seldom allowed to approach his stern father, and so the boy grew up without love—love the first necessity of childhood. The boy was silent, sad, and delicate; men said he was not without feeling, and even talent, but the soul forced to grow without sympathy, is like a flower grown without sunshine, but a pale, miserable failure. When the boy was twelve years old, sunlight suddenly broke upon him. An orphan girl, an heiress, and a distant relative, was committed to the old knight's guardianship by a dying friend. The office was an unwelcome one to him, but one circumstances compelled him to accept. Who cannot, and yet who can, understand the new world of emotions which opened to the boy. From the first hour of the beautiful little stranger's arrival he loved her—nay, worshipped. In his inmost heart he cherished and loved her more and more, and boy though he was, resolved when manhood came, to woo and win her for his bride. For her he vowed to make his name renowned. For her he would gird on his sword, and win glory in the Holy-Land—at her feet, should all his laurels be laid—and then having made her name as well as his own immortal, he would dare to claim the reward of her love. Dreams, dreams all! Manhood came to the boy, but, alas, the strength of manhood came not with it. Ill health unnerved both his arm and his mind; how could he, with scarce the physical strength of a girl, go forth to cope with warriors. In silent agony he saw his dreams not of fame alone, but of love also, fading away; for how should the poor, sickly, unknown youth ever dare to speak of love to the beautiful, queenly young heiress. Pride and honor both forbade the thought. He sought to school him-

self—to accustom himself little by little to the idea of resigning the object of his long cherished love—but this lesson his stubborn, foolish heart utterly refused to learn.”

Ralf suddenly paused, and an inexplicable emotion shook his whole frame. Lenora was almost as much agitated, yet she spoke first.

“Pray, how does the story end—happily, I hope? Go on, I beg.”

“Nay, the tale is not worth finishing,” said Ralf, “the end cannot be otherwise than gloomy, and would make you sad. Doubtless the presuming youth received the fate his audacity merited.”

“You are severe,” replied Lenora, “I know not how the proud dames of old might have looked on such a love, but had I such a lover I should say to him, there are other fields besides the battle-field—the pen is the sword of modern times—go forth and conquer. Then come to me, and I will show you what reward love has for him who has won fame.”

The young girl spoke with enthusiasm, her head was raised, and her cheeks were flushed, but as she concluded a blush rushed to her cheeks, and she bowed her head in sudden shame. The youth spoke not a word; his emotion seemed too deep for speech, and the quick flush which spread over his face was succeeded by a mortal paleness. After a long silence, more eloquent than words, Ralf took his companion's hand in his and kissed it reverently, “adieu, Lenora, you will hear of me next through the mouth of fame, or never.”

On the morrow Lenora sat again on the mossy rock—alone now—turning over the leaves of a book, seeking there for a tale which she knows she shall not find.

Two years have gone slowly by, and the world has not yet heard of our poor Ralf. During this time he has been busy, however, with his books and pen, and his pale cheek is now still paler than before. But the die will soon be cast—this very night all will be achieved, and he will have won fame, and with it love, or all will be lost. To-night his play is to be produced, the beloved child of his imagination is to be brought to the light of day. No longer an ideal creation it is now to take its place among the realities of the world. The stern, unbiased public is to pronounce judgment, and no undue tenderness, no weak indulgence will warp that judgment, though the author's heart should be broken by the decision.

In feverish excitement as the time approached, Ralf dressed himself with unusual care, and took his way to the theatre. From behind the half

drawn curtain of his box, he saw the company assembling—it was already a crowded house, and no party was without its interest in Ralf's eyes. He took singular pleasure in watching lovely ladies, gaily dressed, step lightly across the seats to take their places in front, while attending gallants gathered behind them, and all seemed eager, bustling expectant—all had come to see his play. But see—there—there—what queen enters yon box? Ralf's heart is beating violently, for it is she—his own, his Lenora. Once again he sees her, more beautiful, more queenly than ever. How comes she here? Does she know—yes, she knows all, he feels sure, and she has come to witness his—yes, it *must* be—his triumph.

The curtain rises, and the play begins, but Ralf sees nothing but the earnest face of Lenora, whose cheeks are crimsoned by excitement. Ralf's heart is busy only with her—his play is utterly forgotten. It was not till the close of the first act that his thoughts once reverted to it. A deadly stillness was over the house—an ominous silence—no warmth, no enthusiasm—Ralf almost feared the beatings of his agitated heart would be heard in the death-like quiet. Again the curtain rises, and now his eyes are directed eagerly to the stage. What is the matter? The actors seem palsied by the coldness of the audience, who in their turn are chilled by the automaton-like acting. The whole thing is spiritless, lifeless. Ralf knows all is over, long before the storm of hisses and groans announced that the play is “damned.”

Utterly overcome, Ralf turned his dim eyes to Lenora. She sat still and motionless, with compressed lips, and cheeks white as marble. The sight wholly unmanned Ralf's already exhausted nature, and in the effort to rise and leave the theatre, he fell back lifeless into the arms of some strangers in the same box with him. They bore him from the house, and conveyed him to his lodgings. A raging fever had already seized upon him, and for many days he raved in wild delirium—telling how he staked all on one die and lost—and how he has not now strength left to begin the struggle anew. But an angel is by his bedside, soothing and cheering him with sweet whispers of hope and love. To Lenora's tender care he owes it that his life is spared. His father too is often by his bedside—an old man now, and much changed. Lenora has let sunshine also into that old heart, and softened and subdued it by her tenderness.

Once more Ralf was able to ride out, and strange fancy, Lenora insisted that the first drive should be in the evening, and to the theatre. It

would rouse Ralf from his deep dejection, she said. But when there Ralf sat beside Lenora, pale, listless, and unobservant like one in a dream, till the loud applause of the audience drew his attention to the stage. Was it some trick of his imagination, or was it indeed his own play, that was being acted with so much grace and spirit. He listened breathless with delight, every point told—the wit was so sparkling and effective, that even Ralf himself was astonished at its brilliancy. The curtain fell amidst rounds of applause, and Ralf being recognized as the author, was eagerly called for. It was a trial for his modest nature, but he pushed aside the curtain, and bowed gravely and gracefully to the audience. The ride home was nearly silent, but when alone with Lenora, Ralf said, like one sore perplexed, “how is this, Lenora—I cannot understand it?”

“’T is a simple matter enough,” replied Lenora, smiling. “On the night when your play was pro-

duced, the principal actor was absent from indisposition, and his substitute ruined all by knowing nothing of his part. I saw how it was, your play was full of genius, it had all the elements of success, but everything was ruined by the manner in which it was produced. Your father and I persuaded the manager to give it another and fairer trial—the result was its entire success. It has now been acted every night for two weeks, and is in short—the rage. Now, dear Ralf, are you content? Are you famous enough yet to satisfy your far-reaching ambition?”

“It is indeed far-reaching when it looks up to your love, my own Lenora,” Ralf replied; “dare it—dare it so aspire?” He stretched out his arms—Lenora sank within them.

“Ah, Ralf,” she sighed, tearfully, “do you think success was needful to win my love? It has long been yours, and never more than when all hope of fame seemed lost to you.”

“YE PAY TITHE OF MINT.”

BY J. THORNTON RANDOLPH, AUTHOR OF “THE CABIN AND PARLOR.”

“PLEASE, sir, if its only a cent.”

It was a plaintive, childish voice that uttered these words. The person addressed, a burly, yet luxuriously dressed man, checked the rapid pace with which he was hurrying along, and turning to look for the speaker, beheld a little girl, poorly clad, who stood under the street lamp, her thin, wan face and unnaturally large eyes telling one of those tales of orphaned and beggared childhood, the prey of starvation and fever, such as make modern cities Gomorrah.

The night was shutting in, with a drizzling rain, that froze as it fell. The long street, usually so crowded at this hour, was now almost deserted. Most of the retail stores were already closed, as if to keep open were useless on such an evening, and the clerks, here and there, were putting up the slides of the others. Now and then the solitary tread of a belated mechanic or merchant hurrying homeward was heard, or a muffled figure flitted by in the comparative darkness and disappeared down the shadowy avenue: but with these exceptions nothing disturbed the silence of the desolate thoroughfare.

Something in the tone of the suppliant's voice, which struck him as strangely familiar, had checked the footsteps of the man we describe. The child immediately sprang forward, with one hand drawing a summer shawl around her thinly clad figure, while she eagerly extended the other, and looked imploringly up.

“Oh! sir,” she said, “I’ve had nothing to eat since morning. If I go home without anything I’ll be whipped; and not get supper either. Please, sir, please.”

But the momentary curiosity, or pity, or other motive whatever it was, that had induced the man to stop, had now left him: he rudely pushed back the child, as if her rags made her an outcast to humanity, saying angrily,

“Get away with your lies, you whining little hypocrite. Go to the guardians of the poor; they’ll take care of you: they’re paid for it.”

But, with a strange pertinacity, the child followed him. She had literally eaten nothing, as she said, that day, and was desperate with hunger, and with cold. Everywhere she had been repulsed when she asked alms. The doors of warm and splendid dwellings, where luxury

wasted daily more than the pittance she asked, had been slammed in her face; sour tradesmen had turned her out of their stores, with sharp words, angry that she should bring her squalidness to offend the eyes of their fine-lady customers; she had been called impostor, beggar's brat, and other vile and insulting names; and yet not a cent, not a crust of bread had been bestowed on her all through that long winter day. For many hours, lingering about the shop-windows, in a state of half stupefaction, she had ceased to ask. But when night began to fall, came the recollection of the punishment that awaited her, if she returned without money, to the miserable cellar which was her home. Not home in the sense which you and I, reader, understand the word. But such a home as friendless orphans have among the vicious and outcast, who feed such little ones, not for charity, but that they may live on the alms those pale faces and piteous tones extort in the public streets. So, rousing herself, the child renewed her task. But, for once, all in vain. The very tempest which, beating so pitilessly on her poor unprotected head, ought to have softened every heart in her favor, seemed to have a hardening effect, rendering them impatient to reach warmth and shelter, and irritating them at being stopped. So when this last appeal appeared about to fail, despair lent her unusual courage; she ran after the speaker; and clutching his coat, cried,

“Please, sir, I don’t know where to find the people you tell of; but give me something, only this once; only this once.”

Her teeth chattered, and her voice shook with cold; any man of ordinary feeling would have had pity: but Mr. Morrison held certain principles, on which he prided himself, respecting poverty. Nobody, he said, starves in a free country like this, unless by their own fault. He had begun life a poor boy himself, and knew all about it. “Besides, he didn’t believe,” he would continue, “in this modern cant about the poor having a right to be supported. Whoever couldn’t work ought to want. The case of children was no exception, for even if they starved, it was only the sin of the father being visited on the descendants, since people too poor to support offspring committed a crime in marrying. At

the worst, beggars had no claims on him, for the state undertook to support the poor, and taxed him and other property-holders for the purpose; and if he gave alms in the street, he only paid twice over, besides encouraging vagrancy. No," he was accustomed to exclaim, buttoning up his pockets energetically, "he would never give a street mendicant a cent; it was a principle with him not to do it; if others would imitate his example, society would soon get rid of this pest, for these whining beggars would go to work in order to avoid starving." Ah! he paid "tithe of mint, anise and cummin, but omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, *mercy* and faith." He tore himself, rudely, from the child's grasp, saying, with cruel inflexibility,

"Let go, let go: don't stop me; I know all about your tricks." And as he hurried away, he muttered to himself, "the police oughtn't to let a man be annoyed in this manner: besides, what a life they're allowing that child to grow up to."

The girl retreated to her old position, letting her hands fall listlessly by her side, so that the wind blew apart her wet shawl and revealed how scantily she was dressed. A thin, torn frock, clinging close to her figure, showed that her underclothes were altogether too few; and her feet were stuck into shoes, that after being often patched, still gaped to the cold and wet. Oh! tender-hearted mothers, pray heaven that your little ones may die, rather than be left, in indigence and orphanage, to a lot like this.

For not always had this patient, suffering child been such as she was now. She remembered when, far back in her young existence, she had a comfortable home, and a mother who fondled her: when lullabies sang her to sleep, and soothing words reassured her if she woke frightened from a dream. Not that life had ever been as joyous to her as to other children. That loved mother was always sad, and often in tears, and so a shadow had fallen on the daughter in her very infancy. Her young mind could not entirely understand it even yet, but, as she never knew a father, like other children did, she often thought now vaguely that her mother must have been a widow. While that dear parent lived she had never known a want. They had not enjoyed splendor, but they had possessed comfort; and their mutual affection would have supplied even deficiencies. But, at last, the mother had died. The child was too young at the time to remember exactly how, was still too young to comprehend everything connected with it. But she had a vivid memory of their living in a poorer house, of sometimes going without meals, and finally of being held to kiss her mother, who

lay in bed and seemed strangely altered. Then she recollected a sad, sad day, a day she should never forget if she lived to be as old as the withered crone who sometimes whipped her; when she saw her mother stiff and cold in what they called a coffin; when she heard a lid screwed down over that sweet countenance; and when strange men carried the ugly thing away, with her mother fastened in it, and the crone shook her, and beat her at last, because she went into such a passion of cries and tears at the sight.

After this all was a blank comparatively. She remembered nothing since but cold, and hunger, and ill-usage. Nothing but being driven out to beg, and punished if she was unsuccessful. Nothing but sleeping in one corner of a damp cellar, where she was woke often by rats running over her, but where as often she could not sleep at all for cold. How long she had lived this life, or what tie united her with the outcasts who kept her, she was ignorant. Hunger and cold, cold and hunger, these stern realities engrossed her young mind; and she had no thought, no feeling but this. Yes! there was one subject else that often occupied her. Lying awake, in the long, lonely nights, she recalled that motherly face which, even in its saddest mood, always looked lovingly on her's, and remembered how from those dear lips had come strange words about a beautiful country, where good children went after death, and where somehow, in some vague way, she had a conviction that her parent now awaited her. It was a place, she recollected to have heard, where cold, and hunger were no more; where trees and grass and flowers grew by lovely rivers; and where all day long, forever and forever, happy children went singing, hand in hand, or sat at their mothers' knees, listening to stories of the Good Shepherd, who took little ones that he loved, up in his bosom, like lambs, as she had once seen in a picture. She had a shadowy idea also that it was here the angels lived, and that her mother now was one, though none the less her mother: and sometimes, in dreams, she saw that remembered face, radiant with light, smiling on her: and oh! how blest she was. But these things were rare, and seemed to grow rarer. She never now heard of heaven, or angels, or the Good Shepherd. She never saw any one kneel in prayer. But her ears, day and night, were filled with curses, and with words of which she knew not the meaning, except that it was something horrible. This life was fast benumbing her, she felt that: but she was too young to know why: and so the sadness and loneliness and despair at her heart increased; and life grew more and

more a blank, with only cold and hunger left, hunger and cold.

All this rose to her memory, in a dull, faint way, till she grew unconscious of time. She still stood where we left her, but the night had now closed entirely in, the stores were all shut, and she and the tempest were alone together. At last a rough voice aroused her.

"Hillo there," it cried. "Come, be moving."

She looked up, and recognized a watchman, who, in shaggy overcoat, and with badge on hat, was going to his post. The child had learned already to dread the law and its officers; for they had always harsh words, and only harsh words for her; and starting, she hurriedly moved away.

"I say," cried the watchman, raising his voice that she might hear, "don't let me catch you here again to-night, or it'll be worse for you."

He had a vague suspicion that she was a spy, in the employ of some burglars: like the respectability he represented and guarded, he could never see misfortune in the beggar, but only vice and crime.

His harsh voice quickened her pace to a run, and she fled onward through the tempest, almost breathless, turning a corner here, and another there, till finally glancing over her shoulder, and not seeing him, she ventured to slacken her speed. She found that she had left the business portion of the city, and was now in a street occupied entirely by dwellings. The windows of the houses were all closed tightly, however, and as not a person was abroad, everything looked inexpressibly lonely and desolate. The child thought of her cold cellar, for a moment, almost with relief. But the recollection of the terrible punishment she had received, on the last occasion she returned empty-handed, nerved her to continue out, in the faint hope that she might yet meet some charitable person. At the worst, she thought, it was better walking about, even in the storm, than returning to that angry crone, especially if, now and then, she could only come across an open window or two, and see the reflection of the fire shining ruddily inside.

One appeared in view even now. It was there, half a block ahead, where the light streamed quite across the street, in two broad, warm, cheerful strips from the parlor windows. She hurried her pace, and soon stood at the house. The sleet was rattling against the panes, and coating the brick front with ice; the wind roared madly as it twisted and bent the ornamental trees on the pavement; all without was cold, wet, forbidding. All did we say? No, for that pale, shivering orphan girl forgot her hunger,

forgot the tempest, when she saw that genial light, and heard the merry, childish laughter within. It was a house to which some young cousins had come, from another city, to spend a fortnight with the little boy that belonged there; and every evening for a week past they had been having such grand times, as they would every evening for a week to come. Oh! how that houseless one without envied those little ones. How she stood on tip-toe to try and peep within. How, failing in this, she would have ascended the steps if she dared, and endeavored to catch a glimpse in that way. Yet how, though disappointed in all, and wishing often that she could be inside a happy child at play with the rest, she was cheered even by the sound of the laughter, and warmed by the fire-light reflected on the ceiling.

Several times she went away, dreading lest some person should come out and detect her, for so deep had the sense of degradation sunk into her soul, that it almost seemed wrong to be watching rich and respectable people in this way, stealing their crumbs of fire-light and merriment, and drinking the overflow of their exuberant happiness. But she returned as often. The house had a spell for her she could not resist. It appeared to her as if she had, somehow, a right to share in its comfort and joy; as if she was being defrauded by this exclusion from it; or, at worst, as if there was gross injustice that she should be shivering hungrily outside, while within there was such a superfluity of all things. It made her happy also, for the moment, when she came in sight again of that bright, warm window, and heard the merry laughter of little boys and girls, mixed occasionally with the sweet tones of woman and the full, hearty voice of manhood. Once or twice the sound of the latter seemed familiar to her. Was it the voice that had so cruelly refused her two hours ago? Oh! no, it could not be that: it was only a strange coincidence; from no such cold and callous heart could come laughter like this.

The last time she was driven away, her fears of detection nearly proved true, for a colored servant coming to close the shutters, caught a glimpse of her running off. After a while, however, she returned again, and though all was now dark and desolate, she could as little leave as before: nay! the dread of being discovered being now removed, she felt a certain pleasure in her security, that almost compensated for the absence of the lighted windows and the gay merriment. She sat down on the steps, at first with a little nervousness; but this gradually wore off;

and ascending step by step, at successive intervals, at last she nestled close to the very door. It was strange, but a sensation of warmth seemed still to go out from the house, and fold the child in its arms, till, as she pressed against the door, she began to feel as she used to, in the old, dear days, when folded to her mother's bosom.

The night advanced. In their little beds, lovingly encircling each other with their arms, slumbered the children within; and in the next chamber lay a fair, sweet lady, and by her side her sleeping lord. Ah! had she known all his history, would she lie there so peacefully? Strange that no dark dreams disturbed his rest. Had he forgotten the tale of pretended love, the insidious arguments, and the other treacherous means, which he had employed to win the trust of one who, if living, had a prior right, in the eye of God, to that place at his side? Did the grave never open, that his victim might come, and standing at the foot of his bed, gaze on him, with sad, reproachful eyes, till his hair bristled with horror and his blood froze? Was no sepulchral voice heard, at dread midnight, asking where was his first-born? Did never a sheeted figure, damp and icy from the tomb, place itself silently between him and his wife? Could it be that, with such a sin upon his soul, he could look men honestly in the face, or fold his innocent boy to his bosom? Was there never remorse in the heart of that proud and successful man? Oh! while society forgives the traitor, and condemns the betrayed unheard, men will sleep unbroken slumbers, though the cold grave holds their victims, and though their abandoned offspring lie starving at their doors. So the rich merchant slept on, nor thought of the child he had denied, and left to perish in the streets; and so that child slept at his threshold, in cold and wet, as its dead, wronged mother slept in the dark churchyard.

Once that houseless little one stirred and half awoke. It was when a watchman went slowly by, on the other side, drowsily crying the hour. But his faint steps had scarcely died down the long street, when she slumbered again. The rain still continued, freezing as it fell; but cold, nor hunger, nor wet affected her now. She dreamed, and in that dream saw things, to which all she had fancied of happiness was nothing. There was warm sunshine, and delicious fruits, and beautiful grass where children were playing, children who did not fly from her, or frown when she drew near, but smilingly asked her to join their sports. There also came her mother, more kind, more beautiful than ever. She sprang to meet her with a cry and was folded to her bosom.

Oh! blessed dream, must she awake from it? Awake to cold, and hunger, and friendlessness again? No, thanks be to God! for all is not a dream. It has become a reality at last. Another lamb has been added to the heavenly flock: and the orphan, rejected by her earthly father, sleeps in the arms of Jesus.

At day-break, the servant who came to open the door started back in affright; for nestled close to it, on the sill outside, lay a pale child in a winding-sheet of ice. Terrified, he summoned his master, who, at this unusual occurrence, hastened to rise.

"Its some poor chile," said the old colored coachman, as he tenderly bore in the corpse, "dat's got nobody to take care of it. Poor thing, see how thin she's dressed; and her arms looks as if she been a-most starved."

The merchant was gazing with eager eyes. He had recognized the beggar child of the preceding evening, and his compressed lips showed that he felt something like remorse.

But a sharper pang was reserved for him. Suddenly the grey-headed negro said,

"What's this?" And, as he spoke, he drew forth from the bosom of the child a locket, which had been suspended from the neck by a simple string.

Mr. Morrison, at this exclamation, leaned forward. But at sight of the locket he staggered back as if he saw a spectre.

The old coachman sprang to assist his master, saying, "Lor Almighty, sir, what's the matter? Are you sick? You're not used to this kind o' thing."

Mr. Morrison with a strong effort, rallied, and holding out his hand, said,

"Give me that locket. It may afford some trace to the child's parents."

For he had recognized a gift of his own in that trinket. With it, like a flash of lightning, came the consciousness of what it was that had so powerfully attracted him, the evening before, in the voice and look of the child. He knew that his first-born lay before him. And for once in his life he believed in the fearful words:—"Vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord."

He took the locket with trembling hands, and hurrying from the room, shut himself up for hours. What passed within those locked doors no human eye saw. When he reappeared he was as calm as usual; but the old coachman, who alone had seen his emotion, fancied that there were traces on his countenance of a mighty struggle gone through, and his suspicions grew to certainties when an undertaker was sent for,

a handsome coffin ordered, and this cast-away child, shipwrecked at the door of the rich man, was interred in the family burial lot.

The world wondered, and praised the act. No one had thought that Mr. Morrison would ever, for mere compassion, do so humane a deed. Many regretted they had misjudged him. Others, when they next met him, pressed his hand more warmly than had been their custom. Alas! alas!

For already the incident has passed from his memory, or is remembered only as an unpleasant dream, he labors to forget. "Even if the world knew all," he says to himself, "I would not be

greatly blamed; such affairs are common things, only they do not always end so tragically:" and, in his secret soul, he thinks it very hard that he should have been the victim of so unfortunate a catastrophe.

There are some men, so naturally callous of heart, or so self-righteous in conventional morality, that "they will not believe, though one rose from the dead."

He is still the rich and respectable Mr. Morrison, scrupulously paying "tithe of mint."

But there is a God in heaven. There will be a Judgment Day!

TOM HARRIS' SECOND WIFE.

BY CARRY STANLEY.

EVERY one wondered when it was known that Tom Harris was going to marry Mary Allen. The buxom, rosy-cheeked wives of the neighboring farmers declared that such a delicate spoiled thing as she had been was not fit to superintend such a farm as that—a poor, puny, slip of a girl, as white and as limp as a rag, who never did anything at home but sew and read, or perhaps dust up a little on busy days; he'd find out that he would want any quantity of "help," as well as a housekeeper and nurse if he married her, they knew; and the good dames looked wisely, and shook their heads and sighed over poor Tom Harris.

In the midst of these prognostications, Mary Allen became the young farmer's wife.

She ventured on her arduous duties with a quiet determination which rather astonished her hard working neighbors, but they sagely remarked that "a new broom swept clean," and that Tom Harris would discover yet that he had married a child to nurse, instead of a wife to help him. But Tom himself seemed very well satisfied with his bargain; his sweet young wife was the very light of his eyes. He never heard her complain of her being tired of household duties, but everything went on like clock work; no bustle, no hurry; his favorite pies were always on the dinner-table, his favorite cakes always ready for tea; and when the day's work was done, and Tom had drawn off his heavy boots, and run his feet into the comfortable slippers which his wife had worked, he gave her a kiss, took up his newspaper, and whilst she stitched steadily away, he read to her; but always the little story or sketch on the first page, then the marriages and deaths, the general news, till at last came accounts of agricultural fairs, the best ways of grafting trees or keeping turnips, the superiority of guano over lime as a manure, the prices of wheat, corn and potatoes, and so on down to the very advertisements.

Then came the large, mellow apples, the crisp, spiced gingerbread, and the mulled cider prepared by Mary's own hands, because they were her husband's favorite evening refreshments.

In the meantime, in the kitchen, the milk had been strained and put away, the tea things placed in the closet, the wood brought in for the next morning's fire, the pots and kettles filled, and

Sam and Kitty, two little "take" children, as they are called, set down to sew carpet-rags, whilst the older "farm help" gathered around the two tallow candles on the little stand before the fire; the girls to sew, and one or two of the men to take up a spelling-book or testament, or with a blotted sheet of paper before them, proceeded laboriously in their self-education.

Directly would come a quiet voice from the sitting-room calling Kitty and Sam, who hustled away the carpet-rags, gave each other a pinch or push, and usually made out to tumble into the sitting-room together.

The apples, and gingerbread, and cider, had been cleared away, and in their place was the large family Bible. Mary opens it and read in a sweet, musical voice, the cadences of which have a wonderful magnetism for her husband, who receives new revelations through her; Kitty's black, restless eyes roam over the room, settling now and then on her mistress with a loving look, then wandering off again with a mischievous glance to Sam, who has become tired of kicking his heels against the round of his chair, and is nodding away, first on one side, then on the other, till, to Kitty's great delight, he has nearly lost his balance and fallen over.

The farmer's wives of the neighborhood had waited with some anxiety their first introduction into Tom Harris' house after the installation of its new mistress, but they were obliged to acknowledge that her bread was light and sweet, beyond criticism, her butter delicious, and the tea the most fragrant they had ever tasted. It soon happened that there was scarcely a Sunday when she appeared at meeting, that she was not informed that if her husband and herself would be at home, some two or three of the neighbors would come to spend the afternoon with them; for the good people who worked hard through the whole week, looked upon it as no sin to use the Sabbath as a day of rest and relaxation, and visit their neighbors to discuss the crops, the weather, the poultry, and the sermon of the morning.

The young matron moved about her house with a quiet ease, which astonished her more bustling friends. "She always looks so easy and calm-like," said old Mrs. Reeves, "that she

puts me in mind of a lily and rose-bud together. I really think the pink or blue ribbons she wears around her neck has something to do with it, the rest of her dress is so plain, and grey, that they seem to bring her face out, like. But she looks very poorly, poor thing. I'm afraid she ain't long for this world."

And Mrs. Reeves was too nearly right. From the time of little Nelly's birth, the young wife seemed to grow more shadowy. The great, healthy child appeared to thrive on its mother's very life. As it grew larger and stronger every day, the plaything of Kitty and the wonder of Sam, Mary Harris' step became slower, and her cheek thinner. The evening chapters were often interrupted by spells of coughing, and Tom Harris now saw that the house was fast and safe of evenings, in the place of his wife.

Very gradual but sure was the change. The panting breath came harder night by night as she ascended the stairs; the eyes grew brighter, the feverish cheek thinner, and the white hands more transparent as the winter wore on. And then came the time, when she no more took her seat at the breakfast-table, when her husband swallowed his cup of coffee with a great gulp as if with a sob, when Kitty browned the toast and made the tea for her mistress with the air of a connoisseur, and carried it to her bedside; when she would hush the cries of little Nelly, go stealthily around the room on tip-toe, drop the curtains if Mary slept, with wonderful judgment and care in one so young.

March with its cutting winds came. On the uplands small patches of snow were still visible, the brown fields and leafless trees looked sad and desolate. On a quiet Sabbath afternoon, when huge crows wheeled and cawed busily over the bare fields, breaking the else profound stillness, there was another gathering at Tom Harris'.

Wagon after wagon drove into the white gate and deposited its inmates at the entry door; stalwart men scraped their feet, entered shyly, shook hands with each other, took their seats, and spoke in whispers; then wives went into a darkened chamber with its covered glasses, to look at a pale-white corpse there, whispered to each other over the coffin with tearful eyes, and left the room to make places for others.

Then the minister spoke to the nearest relatives in the next chamber, soothingly and hopefully, and taking up his hymn book, asked all who could to join him, and gave out the words, "I would not live away."

At first there was a pause; none in *that* room could find strength to join in; again the good man repeated the words—a trembling, sobbing

voice here and there now commenced, till the verse was caught up by those in the entry, in other rooms, and at length the strong bass of manly voices, and sweet woman tones from parlor and kitchen swelled the hymn into something like a triumphal shout.

Then came the short, simple prayer, that this great cross to the bereaved ones, might bring the crown, that the grave in which the beloved wife, and daughter and sister, was to be laid, might to them be the portal, even though a dark and dreary one, to a mansion in the skies; that their love for the departed might be the gentle cords drawing them nearer her home in heaven.

After that was a terrible stillness; then the uncertain step of men, bearing a heavy weight, down a staircase; then a sob here and there; then the moving of chairs, the rustle of garments, and muffled footfalls; then the rasping of carriage wheels over the dirt and stones; and in the midst of this solemnity, the pining cry of a little child just able to articulate, "mamma, mamma, mamma."

Four years have passed since that still March Sabbath. Report says that Tom Harris is looking around for another wife, that his mother is getting too old to be worried with the care of so large a farm, and that she is going to live with a married daughter; that Nelly Harris wants some one to bring her under discipline; and this time the good gossips who so murmured at the prospect of the first wife, all agree that the Widow Brown, who, it is said, is to be the second Mrs. Harris, is exactly the woman for the place. She is a year or two older than Tom, but that is no disadvantage on a farm, whose prosperity depends almost as much on the thrift indoors as out of them; then her property joins Tom's own; and then again she has no children to take her affections from little Nelly; and, moreover, she is a notable house-wife, who has wonderful butter and cheese, and a peculiar talent for curing pork.

When the weary longing for Mary's presence had in some degree died away, there came another longing for a nearer companionship than his mother's, a something wanting which his child or his farm could not supply, till somehow, he knew not how, he found himself engaged and married to the Widow Brown. And so Tom Harris' second wife took her seat at the table where the gentle Mary Harris had presided.

"I don't like her, she ain't a bit like tother Miss Harris," was Kitty's remark to Sam, a few days after the installation of the new bride.

And no wonder Kitty didn't like her, for she was set heartily to work, a thing which had scarcely happened during the whole time of old

Mrs. Harris' government, for Nelly had insisted on keeping Kitty for her own special self, and Nelly ruled the house more than her grandmother did.

Indeed the whole quiet, lazy household soon seemed to change. An hour or two before day, Mrs. Harris called the girls, to be up at their washing on Mondays, and midst the unpleasant smell of suds, the noise of pots moved on the trammels, the dropping of calabashes, and his wife's raised voice, Tom Harris sat to eat his breakfast. He thought with a sigh sometimes of this quiet meal when Mary was at the head of his table, and he would talk over with her the plans for the day, that the grass in "the mash" was to be cut, or the young corn ploughed; but now Sarah bustled about, jumped up from the table as soon as her own coffee was swallowed, pushing him the pot with the sugar and cream, saying he must help himself, for she saw the clothes were boiling. Tom never read Burns, but he certainly felt that

"There's na guid luck about the house upon a washing day."

And the night before baking day, and "baking morning" itself, was but little better.

Sam and Kitty actually dreaded Tuesday and Friday nights. The tea things were hurried away, the dough-trough lid turned upside down with a thump, the flour kettle jerked out with a rattle, and then the work began. Mrs. Harris with an ominous tread proceeded to the flour bin, followed by Kitty, bearing a tallow candle, which in her nervous awkwardness she was sure to hold crooked, and let the streaming tallow drop in the kettle; and Sam, whose work it was to carry a pan of new milk to mix the bread with, up from the cellar, always selected the fallest one, and as surely left a "milky way" on the brilliant red bricks, white cellar steps, and kitchen carpet; and just as surely received the impression of Mrs. Harris' floury hands on his shoulders, giving the final tilt to the milk pan, and sending the white fluid down in a perfect stream. Then Kitty invariably let the first saucepan full which was set over the fire, burn, for which she received a push from her mistress, who declared "she wasn't worth the salt she eat in her vittals."

Then the baking morning! Poor Tom Harris sometimes thought he would rather eat no more than hear such a din.

"It's jaw, jaw, jaw, all the time!" said Sam to Kitty, but Tom who overheard the remark, did not think proper to correct the boy for telling the truth.

Besides that the poor children usually had the

worst of it to bear. If Sam took the scraper to draw the red hot coals from the mouth of the huge brick oven, he nearly always pulled them on his feet, or burnt a hole in his pantaloons; and Kitty, in her hurry to accomplish her work, never took a cloth thick enough to protect her fingers from the hot pie-plate, and generally made out to drop one at least, on the cellar steps, every baking day.

We suspect that Tom Harris had forgotten the text which used to be set in his copy-book, that "comparisons are odious," for often with a sigh did he think of the sweet face, and gentle voice of Mary, and wonder what possessed him ever to marry one so much her opposite.

With Sarah Harris there was no delicate pink ribbon, which gave so engaging and *womanly* appearance to Mary, no gracefully falling folds, with their soft, grey shadows, as in Mary's dress; but with her all was square and hard—her features, her shoulders, her waist, the very plaits in her frock, looked uncompromising. Tom now missed the glass of trailing arbutus and early violets in the spring-time, the first rose-buds of June, or the last white and yellow chrysanthemums, that the frost had left, which used always decorate the little table in the sitting-room.

In truth, too, the sitting-room was but little used now. It was a useless expense, Mrs. Harris thought, to have a fire there in winter, so Tom and herself occupied a table at one end of the kitchen, whilst the now surly servants went off to bed as soon as possible. Apples and cider still appeared at night, if Tom asked for them, sometimes accompanied by a plate of walnuts or shell-barks, which Sam and Kitty usually cracked in about the same proportion as they did their fingers; but if the cider was to be mulled, the poor fellow had to do it himself; and alas, the spiced gingerbread was "as rare as Christian charity."

Tom now read his newspaper to himself, usually dozing by the time he got as far as the advertisements, to be awakened sometimes by his wife's voice loud in reproof, or a box on the ears which she was administering to one of the unlucky children.

Sam and Kitty were not allowed to go to bed on the long winter evenings till eight o'clock, no matter how sleepy they might be, or to sit up five minutes after that hour, if they were as wide awake as noon-day. Kitty still worked on carpet-rags, but she sewed now with no spirit, whilst Sam strode a spade, placed across a tub on the floor, letting the grains of corn which he rasped from the cob, against the edge of the spade, fall into another tub before him.

If Mrs. Harris' back happened to be turned, and Kitty more than usually intent on her carpet-rags, the girl would sometimes feel a grain of corn pop against her face, and see Sam watching her out of one corner of his mischievous blue eyes, which made her forget her own work, and the two would amuse themselves shooting each other as they called it, and often end by dexterously grazing Mrs. Harris' hair. This feat so delighted them, that they could keep still no longer, and their suppressed laughter would be sure to call forth the remark that they were the greatest plagues in the world, with an order to Kitty to go on with her balls, and Sam to shell his corn.

As for poor little Nelly, she was no longer allowed to stretch herself out by the side of old Carlo, and go to sleep, nor to build her cob-houses and sheep-pens, on the great hearth, by the light of the fire, nor to pull straws from the broom to make handles and spouts for her acorn tea-pots.

She was usually dismissed with the tea-things, to her bed, under Kitty's care, who talked her to sleep with the promise of the first lamb for a pet, of hunting hens' eggs in the hay-mow, or of bright flowers and butterflies in the summer-time.

But, alas, her step-mother told her that pet lambs were troublesome, and to "make no more fuss about it," and that she would tie her feet up if she made mud ovens over them, to bake sand pies in acorn cups.

But she could not be deprived of the flowers, and the butterflies, and the sunshine; and the summer-time was a happy time for Nelly Harris, if her mother was only too busy to remember that she was old enough to begin to learn something.

The child sometimes stood peeping through the barn-yard gate, which she dared not enter, applauding Sam and Kitty, who, for her amuse-

ment, would butt at the sheep, put bushel baskets on the calves heads, bestride the cows, and altogether do everything they could to make the cattle as mischievous as possible.

And they succeeded admirably, too. Sam had rendered the sheep so vicious that there was one old fellow with huge twisted horns, that would butt at every one who came near him, but was always foiled by the boy, who had become agile in jumping, from his practice under Mrs. Harris' hands.

Sam generally managed to drive him out of the way if he saw his mistress approach the barn-yard, but one day, as she was walking slowly along with a pan of warm milk for a sick calf, the animal made a spring, bent his head, leveled Mrs. Harris, spilled the milk, broke the pan, and then with a jump over his prostrate victim, ran to another part of the yard.

Little Nelly who, as usual at milking time, was peeping through the bars, screamed with affright, the whole flock of sheep which had not yet been penned rushed in among the cows, who kicked over the pails of milk, while Kitty stuffed her apron in her mouth to keep from laughing, and Sam made a dash at the sheep as if to quiet them, at the same time dexterously driving them back toward Mrs. Harris, who had just risen.

Alas for the judgment from outward appearances. This hard, bustling woman, who would force a dose of medicine upon a sick child as she would the filling into a chicken, with no kind word, no stroking of the hand over the hot brow, no glance of sympathy in her cold, grey eyes; this woman, who attached no human being to her warmly, was pronounced by her neighbors to be a fine person, and an excellent wife, step-mother, and mistress, for she had such splendid cellars, and fat poultry, such a quantity of help at harvest time, that Tom Harris must certainly have got a prize in his second wife. Alas! poor Tom. He never gave his opinion though.

MAUD GARRISON.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "SUSY L——'S DIARY."

CHAPTER I.

THE pretty village of J—— had been going down hill year after year. It had been going down hill, in fact, ever since a Boston company bought the water-power and its environs at S——, on the Winnepisiogee river, two miles below. Since that day, stone factories, brick dwellings and stores, and beautifully shaped wood cottages had been taking their places there at S——, along the pleasant stream, on the hill and knoll sides and tops, wherever there were grand old trees to shade them, and to let in through their sweeping branches glimpses of the sparkling river. And nearly all the enterprise, nearly all the stirring capital of J—— had been turned in hither. George Lund, who was the life of J——, as was admitted on all hands, removed to S——, taking his fine house and his office with him. Dr. Mooney, who was so often arm-in-arm with Lund, as the twain went with strong steps through the streets, moved over to S——, but left his house and office behind to be rented. The Widow Ladd moved from S—— over into his house, because rent was so low at J——, and because young Henry Ainsworth was making the village school so well known both at home and in the neighboring towns, that she would soon fill her house with boarders from the academy. Her twelve-years-old boy sold confections and crackers and herrings in the office. He had few customers, none worth naming, save when parties strolled over from S——; strangers, to look on the beautiful landscape; and old denizens of J——, to see how grass was really growing in strips in the streets, since their busy tread was there no more. They were sad, some of them, as if they trod on graves. While others had self conceit, in seeing that, after all, in one thing they were missed at J——.

At length old Esquire Harvey went over to S——, taking his three or four branches of manufacture and trade, and his score of work-people with him; and from that time the pulse of the village beat thrice languidly—especially in school hours, when no young people were threading the streets and paths—until the Honorable Harrison Garrison came there. He bought the village hotel and the large store close by it. He fitted up the hotel anew, even every nook and corner.

He took away the creaking sign-board—and old Mrs. Thompson could not sleep nights after it; she had heard it so many years, whenever she lay awake in the night. It had been company for her many and many an hour; and she would be glad if the Honorable Harrison Garrison were back in Massachusetts, where he belonged. But there he was at J——. He kicked the old sign-board out of the way with his polished boot; and on granite posts consolidated a new one, inscribed on one side—"Garrison's Coffee House," on the other, embellished with portraits of his horse, Jackson, and of his dog, Pope. The horse Jackson was on his way over the Alps; the dog, Pope, lay composedly with his nose on his pan at his feet. The dog, it seemed, had no faith in any Alps being near.

The store was a dingy place, where of late old Uncle Heath had sold codfish, brown sugar and the like, to stray customers. The Honorable Harrison Garrison flourished his heavy walking stick a little before the small windows and before the eyes of his "head carpenter." It was only a few hours, and large panes of plate glass were there, larger and dearer than could be found even at S——. It was only a few days, and the odor of old Uncle Heath's codfish, brown sugar and strong molasses was put down by the Honorable Harrison Garrison's wines, his spices, his bright green teas, his Baldwins and his Pippins. And then, in a few months, he had nearly all J—— "under his thumb," to use an expressive and well-beloved phrase of his own. All but Henry Ainsworth. He held his individuality as quietly, as completely, all his action was as free, as if no Harrison Garrison had been there at J——; as if he had not so often come upon him at his mother's gate, at the academy turnstile, in the post-office, and in the street, with talk of all he was able and willing to do for the old academy; in giving it a whiter coat, a heavier bell, additional apparatus, and in the use of his influence in bringing in pupils, patrons, and so on, and so on, from some of the large towns of Massachusetts. Harry thanked him; but came not down in the least to sit at our rich man's feet. On the contrary, his intelligent cordiality, his straightforward manliness made him master of the other, even as he was master of himself.

Garrison had two daughters; the elder, Maud, ugly as one can be who has a wide, thin mouth, with despondent corners; large, abstracted, melancholy eyes; a sallow skin; and, at the same time, a most benign expression beaming upon all the poor and unfortunate who came near, and who let it be felt that her sympathy would be worth the having to them. She was the squire's daughter by his first marriage. Her mother before her was an ugly woman; but with a holy mind, fit for heaven as mortal mind can be made by native innocence, and by God's grace, growing and ripening all the more maturely for the tears with which it was watered, for the suffering with which, day by day, it was harrassed. For her husband, the Honorable Harrison Garrison, was a hard man, who never yet had loved any mortal; not even her, not even in the midst of his vows to love and to cherish. When he knelt to her, as in truth he did, and more like a crouching spaniel than like one who feels himself a man, when he said—"don't say no to me, Grace! That I can never bear!" he thought of her ten thousands in the Suffolk county bank, and longed for them like a miser. Well, Grace looked down on him and said—yes. For she was an orphan. And because she was an orphan and ugly, she had had few to love her. She had very often had dreams—waking ones—of the man she would love to call husband; and not at all like the man of her dreams was Harrison Garrison. He, the man of her dreams, was gentler, with a graver, manlier bearing. But she would let him pass on to the shadowy land. She would no longer need the thought of him for her solitary hours. For she would say yes to Harrison Garrison, and be solitary no more. She said yes; but she did not feel that it lifted any burden. She had never felt so wretched, so far from all mortal aid and comfort, as in that moment. Her wooer, on the other hand, sprang to his feet at the electrical word that put the ten thousands irrevocably into his hands. He paced the floor with vigorous strides; with glistening eyes, talked—as if more to the walls than to Grace—of all he would do there; of the house he would build in the midst of the garden, and of the pillars and trellises with which he would encompass it about. Would not this be capital? Did not Grace think that this would be capital? The shrubbery there must be torn up, and perhaps the great maple; but she would not mind that, sure, if they could have a house that would make all the town look up? she would not mind it then? Grace, half weeping, murmured something about—"the dear old house of her parents—the trees and the roses that her father and mother planted, and that

were so much to her, now that she would see them never, never again!"

"Yes; but you wouldn't mind it, I suppose," said Garrison, stopping a little before her. "You could put up with just *that*, if it was necessary?"

"Yes," Grace said, with a choking voice, that her dog Bay would have understood better than the hard man looming before her. The dog would have laid his nose on her clasped hands, and regarded with thoughtful eyes her bent face; whereas the man liked *that!* He liked to hear her say yes in so meek a way to *that!* So he strode on, and talked on of what other things he would do to make their house the grandest in the village, in the whole town, in fact.

Poor Grace dreaded it all, as she sat there in the corner of the sofa, her thin figure drooping more and more. She dreaded the tall, stiff man who strode the floor before her. She dreaded all the rest of her life that was to come. The tears kept rising and choking her; and the smothered sense of wretchedness oppressed her more and more. It oppressed her more and more while she lived. She drooped more and more, until, a year from the marriage day, she gave birth to a sallow, bony little daughter. She lived long enough after this to throw back the white coverlet and show the babe to its father; to hear him say—"umph!" as he looked a moment sidewise on the homely, working little features; to turn her eyes up to his face and see how hard it was still, after all she had just suffered; to whisper with sobbing breaths—"call her Grace, Harrison, for my mother." And then, in an hour, she sank away and was gone. Nurse went at the babe's low wailing. Dead lips were close to its cheek; dead arms held it loosely to the heart that, happily, could beat no more.

In six months Garrison married the little fly-away Anna Dale. In a few months more she had a daughter, a plump, dark-eyed little beauty; with such graceful little ways, as was seen before it was a month old, that it must and should be called Grace, its mother said. There was no other name in the world fit for the pet, the darling! the beauty! mother's own dear! As for the so-called Miss Grace, throwing her long bony arms about there after the sunshine that strayed across her cradle, who, forever, in all she did, made such homely mouths, she should be called Maud. It was the ugliest name in the world; and this made it the more suitable; for it was to be applied in that instance to the ugliest baby in the world. The hateful little thing! Forever needing something done for it, although it pretended, as its mother did before it, to be the patientest saint in the world. So the thing never

cried, or hardly ever, and then with its face turned close to its pillow, as if that were a better friend to it than she herself was.

CHAPTER II.

IN the years that followed, one can think how it was there. One can know that, through the rooms of the fine house in the midst of the garden, there went two maidens growing to womanhood; one tall, thin, high-shouldered, with drooping figure, with large, sad eyes, and as still voice and tread, as if the air she breathed belonged not to her, but to another; the other plump and merry, with rosy face, clambering, noisy gait, and a hard voice that was always heard in one part of the house or another, in fretfulness or in laughter. She ran over the slow, dreamy Maud; and then said as she flew onward—"out o' the way, Maud!" or "clear the track, Maud!" Maud moved aside like a slave. She felt then, and a hundred times every day, when other offences came, that the lead settled heavier and heavier on her brain; that the palsy of a life without hope pervaded deeper and deeper her whole existence. Her young mother-in-law said—"Maud! Maud! see!—I do wish you ever *would* see anything! Your clothes were brushing the leaves of Grace's hydrangia; and we've told you a thousand times how easy it is to kill the leaves. I do wish you wouldn't *always* be huddling yourself into that corner. I don't see, I'm sure I don't, why you don't stay more in your own room."

Maud moved carefully away, holding her skirts close, and with choking grief; for how many times Grace had brushed them! how many times fallen amongst them direct, breaking not only leaves but branches, while she was on her giddy way! how had her mother only laughed then and said—

"Child! what a gay chit you are! You've torn everything before you! But don't mind it. Don't frown a bit over it, Grace, child! Frowns spoil the very prettiest face. You remember who said this; and I imagine he'll be showing himself here, all of a sudden, this afternoon." She meant Henry Ainsworth.

It often happened that Maud was standing in a doorway or passage when her father would go through on his hurried march to the street, to the garden, to see to John, or Joe, or somebody, somewhere. He came with swift steps. Our Maud was slow and dreamy; that is true; but she always heard and recognized her father's step when it was afar off; and, if he had but known it, with a beating heart too, and a sick

longing that, that time as he passed, he would give her one glance, one little word of consideration. She needed that!—oh, how she needed that! for it would put warmth and life into her cold limbs, and make a new creature of her. She always heard his step, then, in time to move aside and give him ample room. But he had no patience to see her there before him. He called out at one end of the long hall, and she at the other—"Maud, I'm coming! I'm in a hurry!" She shrank away and looked after him with blinded eyes. Perhaps she saw him stop in that very moment of his great haste, if Grace crossed his path, to pinch her ear a little, or to catch her in his arms, and carry her forward a few steps on his way.

CHAPTER III.

HENRY AINSWORTH lived with his widowed mother in a little gem of a house—made so by all the vines and shrubs, and beautiful things that surrounded it and filled it—close at the foot of a steep and magnificently embowered hill. He was often at Mr. Garrison's. Perhaps Maud was in the room, perhaps she was not. It made little difference to any one, whether she were there or not; unless it did to Henry, as may be it did. For he watched the door, whenever it opened if she was absent, and watched her—but with quick glances—if she was present. No one saw this, however. No one knows it to this day, but myself—and yourself, dear reader, now that I have told you.

Grace was always in the room; if not when he came, she was immediately called. Mrs. Garrison was generally in the room. She left it now and then, but looked back, and with broad smiles told them to "enjoy themselves." She left them, "for a reason," as she told her husband and Grace, with a wink and a tip of her head. She liked it best, however, being there to see how bravely things went on; how Grace kept herself quiet and like a woman, for Henry, who had so much dignity blended with his great ease; when, for Hurlbut and others of the wild gents of the village, she had such obstreperous gaiety. She liked to see how the Maud she so hated sat at another table and read or sewed, never speaking but when they spoke to her directly; and then with such awkwardness and blushing and stammering as could not fail to let Henry see how superior Grace was in ease and all manner of social accomplishments.

"Maud," would Mrs. Garrison sometimes say, "anybody would think you had no tongue at all. But," turning to Henry with an air as if there were some things that she could tell him, if she

chose, "but she can talk sometimes, I can tell you that!" She looked Maud searchingly in the face, purposely to increase her confusion. Grace turned half round, with the same unamiable object. Henry always sat where he could see her without turning in the least. He just glanced at her. Whether he pitied or despised her embarrassment could not be known; but the latter Mrs. Garrison and Grace believed. Maud supposed the same. Still that was nothing new, nothing strange. All her family despised her. She despised herself at times. She despised herself and wept bitter tears on her pillow, that when Henry did notice her with a few words and a look that seemed so kind, she must color so painfully and lose all self-command.

One pleasant summer afternoon Henry called and found Maud in the parlor alone. Perhaps he chose that time deliberately; for Mrs. Garrison and Grace and a party of visitors had just rode by his mother's house on their way to a raspberry field over the hill. Maud was far enough from thinking that he chose that time, however. On the other hand, she was distressed for him and for herself, that he came then; when Grace was gone, the Grace he so liked, who so liked him, and always had so much to say to him, and with such calm assurance; while she had so little to say to him or to any one, unless it were to those poor creatures who had nobody else to speak a kind word to them. She would blunder and say the very things she ought not to say, she had no doubt, with the whole weight of entertaining him on her hands. And, in truth, she was not far from doing this, in the first few minutes of their interview. "But," said Henry, putting his nose down to a vase she had just filled; not looking at all on her, but speaking with an easy, kind manner—"you made up this vase of flowers, Maud."

Maud started, but did not speak.

"I know at any time who fills the vases; whether it is you or Miss Grace."

Still Maud did not speak; but she listened with suspended breath to hear what he would say next. He said next, working to get a flower of the Indian creeper without disturbing the rest—"don't you know the difference there is between them, Maud?" He still was busy with the creeper, and putting the flowers he had disarranged in place. Maud could therefore say—

"I don't know—I don't know that there is always a difference."

"There is always; just as there is always a difference between you and her. I don't know how you do it. But the flowers that you bring together have eyes and understanding. They

have a pleasant liking for each other and for us; especially for their good friend Maud, who, as they perhaps know, lives a life that is true and quiet like their own. And, as I flatter myself, sometimes, especially for me, who would gladly be as true and wise; but who yet are sometimes very foolish, and then feel rebuked and instructed both by the quiet flowers and the quiet Maud. But please help me a little, Maud." He was still endeavoring to put the flowers in their proper places. "I am likely to tumble them all out upon the table."

Maud helped him. He was clumsier than he need to have been, a thousand times clumsier, so that Maud and he both laughed to see how nothing would go right that he undertook. And Maud felt such a glow of pleasure, as never, never before in all the years of her life, had gone through her frame, when he praised her and her flowers anew, and with kindling eyes too, and with such a good voice! Before the glow, the new feeling of happiness that came, the old chill and misery went. The weight was off her brain, the palsy out of her blood. Her tongue was, as it were, loosened. Her eyes could meet his, could linger in the meeting, and with a heavenly light in them, when they talked of life and of the philosophy of life. For Maud, who had passed already more solitary hours than fall into a long life-time of most persons, had filled them with the reading and thought that made her wise far beyond her years. Sorrowful experiences had been her good schoolmasters, teaching her the best lesson of looking within her own self for that which would, of a certainty, comfort and strengthen her, make lovely and attractive her outward life. For within ourselves, if we search with an earnest purpose, we find the Father of Light, so that it is dark with us no longer. And the Son waits to take us by the hand, as it were, and lead us, when we will no longer be led by that which is without; by Nature clamoring in our bodies cause; by society clamoring in its own. The Son leads us away from the flowery walks, where are also thorns abundant, along the straight, plain paths. We come together to the still waters; and are refreshed and comforted for the outward things that were so adverse to us, that left our souls so filled with wants and discomforts. The Father and the Son have loving praise for this.

It happened that, in many things, Maud was wiser than Henry. When he assumed that liberty goes backward, especially in Europe, that progress all the world over is toward evil rather than good, she said with an earnest manner—"no; pardon me! but you will see that it is not

so after you have thought more of it. I believe it without a shade of doubt, that every evil upon this earth, although it may abound for a time, has in its very nature of evil, the element of its eradication at work, in a way more or less subtle, within itself. In a little while, perhaps, perhaps in a long while, it is gone, root and branch; and in the place where it abounded, goodness, grace much more abound. Yet other evils are in other places. But they too go on to the end. In God's own appointed time and way, they too are gone, and good is in their stead. Isn't this a dear truth?"

"If it is indeed a truth!" replied Henry, with thoughtful eyes on her face. "I hope it is a truth! I hope to God it is!" His eyes were filled with tears, and a glow was upon every feature.

"A truth it must be in the very nature of good and evil! Of this we may feel assured, even when we cannot see the methods of the law by which it comes to pass. Don't you know, Mr. Ainsworth? wherever the diseased root is, there the worm feeds until it is gone. No worm, meanwhile comes near the healthy root growing in a genial soil." As Maud spoke, a new light of enthusiasm pervaded more and more her whole being, making her even lovely to look upon.

"That is true!" said Henry. "I believe that all you have said is true. And what a glorious idea it is! I see that it can make the world all over new to me! But, friend Maud, how came you by all these great thoughts?"

Maud smiled. "I suppose I have my own mother's organization," replied she. "It was easy for her, and it is for me to love God dearly and to trust in Him; to believe confidently that He will do everything right, and by sure laws. I read a great deal at C—— from the excellent libraries. A cousin, who was a student, and who was in our family, brought me choice works from the college library. I have besides had—I have, in short, had a great deal of time by myself, and a great deal to make me thoughtful beyond my years."

"Yes, I have seen that," said Henry, with looks and tones that went straight to Maud's heart. "I have felt ever since you came to J——, the greatest desire to say something, or do something to make your life more social for you. I have wanted to take you to my mother. She has wanted you to come. You will come, Maud, if I do not take you, if I do not ask you again?"

Maud's eyes filled; the voice had such kindness in it! the eyes such a dear expression of sympathy! But she had no time to answer before the party returned from the fields, with few berries, but much laughter, skipping and

loud talking. They stopped suddenly when they opened the door upon Maud and Henry. Mrs. Garrison recovered herself in a moment, and ran her hand out straight before her in her girlish way, and was vastly glad to see Mr. Ainsworth, vastly sorry that they had made him wait. Henry, meantime, was far enough from feeling that there had been any waiting whatever on his part. Or, so Maud hoped.

Grace, as for Grace, she lifted her head, dropped her eyelids and had pouting lips. For a short time she had. Her mother soon lulled her by petting her, by bringing first young Brown, then all the Browns, and, last of all, Henry himself, to see how the thorns had been abusing her hands and arms, in spite of gloves and all sorts of extemporaneous wrappings in her, her mother's, and young Brown's handkerchiefs. It ended with Henry's leaving soon; after Mrs. Garrison and the Browns—young Brown (who kept putting his eyes on Grace in all he said and did) and all the rest of the Browns—had made him promise to come on the morrow afternoon and ride with them over to S——, to call on the Lunds and the Mooneys, and to see how the new works were coming on; after Grace, with modest eyes and lisping tongue had said—"that is right, Henry, do come!" and after Maud had—said not a word, but had looked on and listened to it all with a quiet, beaming face.

Henry's last word was—after he had made his bow to the rest—"be ready, Maud, when we are. Don't be off in some sly place and keep us waiting."

Maud smiled and bowed; he kept his friendly eyes on her face until he was gone.

CHAPTER IV.

WELL, after this, it was pleasant for Maud to be living on the earth. Every sound of bird, of waterfall, of the winds among the trees, every sight of the beautiful earth, of the beautiful river filled her heart full of glad thankfulness, so that she sang from morning till night. Her affairs were going adverse enough, meanwhile, as the readers will see, when I have told them, that, the next morning, she must needs go and carry broth to the wife of her father's hired man, and stay all day to see to the baby. The hired man would carry her and leave her until night, her mother said. So he carried her and left her until the next day night; but Maud could bear it, she was really of so much service to the poor woman and her sweet babe; and besides she had such a warm thought in her heart every moment! When she came back, a pile of work, cut for the

making, lay on her table. The next morning her mother-in-law came up early, and with her hand on the pile, said that she—Maud that is—must make the articles, the three pairs of sheets, and the three pairs of pillar-cases, and the dozen towels, and half-dozen table cloths, "right away; as soon as she could; and Grace should help below. There must be a great deal done below. There had been nothing done lately but attending to visitors, and sitting and standing round doing nothing. Now there must be something done by them all. She—Maud—must do her part, Grace must do her's. As for herself, she always had as much as her part to do. Mr. Garrison thought that she did a good deal more than her part; and often complained that she didn't put more upon her—Maud—and upon Grace. She was going to begin then to do it." Then she tossed her head and pressed the pile anew and was gone.

Maud sat and sewed after this with diligent fingers; happy in thinking over and over again every word and every look of Henry's in their last interview, interested in seeing the pile diminish, and hoping for the day when she could happen again to be below when Henry called. She had seen him come and go several times; once she saw him go through the yard with Grace close at his side, and Grace's face was upturned to his, his bent to her. Again Maud saw him come in, her father's arm in his; and both had animated features, and took strong and buoyant steps. By slow degrees, as the days passed, each day grew longer than the one before it. Her head ached, her spine was out of tune, from the confinement and the constant sewing. The sky took a leaden hue; it became dark everywhere, especially in our poor Maud's soul. She saw Mrs. Ainsworth come; and a few minutes after Henry, who remained to accompany her home. And when they left, Grace went with them through the yard, breaking flowers by the way for Mrs. Ainsworth. She broke a spray of roses and rose-buds at the gate, and gave it to Henry with a blushing face. Henry's back was toward Maud; she could only see that he accepted the gift with a polite bow. Maud brooded over all these phenomena. They came at length to be, so many links, connecting Henry and the happy, happy Grace; but separating her more and more from him and from every comfort; fastening her even closer and closer within her now desolate chamber. She would break away from the chamber, away from the unhappy reflections, she thought, one afternoon, and sprang to her feet. She would go below to the sitting-room with the rest. She had only been down at meal times for many days.

It must be better there; she heard Grace's laugh come up the stairway and the passages a moment before. She would go down. Perhaps they would speak one kind word to her, or give her one kind look, to lighten her heart a little. If they would do this, she would have courage for the rest. She would then go and walk and feel better for it. She would call and see Mrs. Ainsworth; she would have a heart for this, and it would make her life worth the living, if they would only show her a little kindness. She started and returned to her room more than once, faint and afraid to go; afraid of the cold, scornful glance; afraid that she would open the door upon Henry close at Grace's side. But at length she ventured. Her mother-in-law sat and rocked and laughed at Grace. Grace, over-dressed, and with her bonnet on ready to go out, made low curtesies before the large mirror. The laughter, the rocking, the curtesies were all suspended the moment that Maud's melancholy face was in the door. Mrs. Garrison knit her brow and asked if more work was wanted up stairs. If so, she could bring it; there was enough more cut out, waiting. She rose to go, beckoning Maud to follow.

No, Maud said. It was not work that she wanted. She already had enough for several days, unless her head ached less. She came down to rest; to walk; she came down thinking that she would go out.

"Where?" Mrs. Garrison asked, with her hand on the door-knob. She was a woman keen in all sorts of intrigues. Maud's downcast eyes and heightened color, when she talked of going out, made her suspicious. "If," she added, with the bitterest expression, "if you're thinking of going to see Henry and his mother, I have the pleasure of telling you that Mrs. Ainsworth has gone out of town, and that Henry can save you the trouble of going to see him. He will be here in—in just two minutes, now"—looking sharply at the little clock on the mantel-piece. "He's coming to carry Grace out. And if you want to see him *very much*"—with renewed tossings of the head—"you can, by waiting here."

She still held the door as if for Maud to go. Grace stood just as she had broken off in the midst of a curtesy; settled back, and with fingertips nipping the skirt of her beautiful silk dress. Her head was twisted half-round on her long, slender neck; and her eyes, in which was an exultant leer, were fixed on Maud, who, quite stupified by the reception she had met, turned and left the room in silence. She sat down at her window without tears, without indeed any keen sensibility of suffering. She had just the

feeling that she was turning to lead; that her brain was already half through the process. She looked listlessly abroad, wondering, if, in all those dwellings she saw far and near, there was another so solitary, so without hope as herself. She saw Henry come with brisk steps through the yard; but, this time, with no quickening of the pulse. There was just this sluggish thought—"he is no more anything to me. I am no more anything to him. I am no more anything to anybody. I would my time to die were here. Would it were here this night; it is so hard to live on!"

Soon her father's carriage was brought round to the door; and without stirring a limb, she bent her eyes a little and saw them go—Henry and Grace. Grace had a demure gait, a demure face; a gait and a face she was accustomed to put on when Henry came; very little like those Maud had seen her wearing below, a few minutes before. Henry went straight-forward to the carriage, handed Grace in, and they were gone.

It was a long time, and then the tea-bell rang. That was nothing to Maud in this hour of her utter prostration. It was nothing to her; she could not feel that she would ever want to taste food again. There was no pleasure for her in anything; none in eating, none in drinking, none in anything that could come. She wished that she were dead, quite dead.

Ah, Maud, in that hour of thy sore need, where was thy thought of the Good One, who never yet had failed thee, when thou didst look to Him; who, notwithstanding all the adversities of thy condition, had yet made thee a happier child than all the earth could have made thee without thy consciousness of this abiding ever in thee and thou in Him? It was in this wise that Maud questioned herself at length, in the midst of penitance and tears. Dearer and dearer, every moment, as she thought of all He had been to her in the life that would else have been so wearisome, became the Father to her. His Word lay by her; she clasped it with love in her hands, and knelt and gave thanks to God for—Himself. From that moment strength was in her limbs, clearness in her brain. Light was in her chamber and upon the face of the sunset sky. She could believe that, in God's good time, other things would be added unto her—a happy home, where would be radiant faces turning to her; books, which all should read and talk about; music, in which many voices should unite with a beautiful harmony; and, above all, a kindness that should know no misapprehensions, no abatement. While she thought of this, and with fingers again busied over the pile of sewing, her mother-in-law called her at the foot of the stairs.

"Maud! a letter for you. Come down and get it. From your Aunt Anna, of course," she added, glancing at the superscription. "We heard she had come back to Worcester to live. Her Brother Frank is dead, I suppose you know."

"No," answered Maud, breaking the seal. "I have heard of Aunt Anna living at Cleaveland with her brother. This is the one?"

"Yes! this is the one. I don't know anything about her; or much, that is," Mrs. Garrison went on, as Maud opened the letter. "Frank died last year, I believe. I forget particulars; for I always hated them both. I never have seen either of them but once since I was married to your father; and I never want to. All I know is, that we heard that the old maid had got back to Worcester. We thought she might like to have you go and live with her; and so wrote about it; only four days ago. She's prompt, any way."

Maud was running eager eyes over the page now; and Mrs. Garrison watched her in silence. The letter was a brief one. She answered Mrs. Garrison's note in haste, Aunt Anna said; at the moment of its reception she answered it, while she was dressed to go out. She was going out, she said, to order some little measures which should make her coming birthday a day of pleasure for herself and her friends. Would not her niece oblige her by making haste to be with her on that day? It would then be the day also of her installation in her new home, so that its subsequent anniversaries would be doubly grateful; especially to her, who, since the death of her dear Brother Frank, had had no one of her beloved near her, save when her youngest brother, Ben, of New York, came. This was not often, he was so swallowed up by his business cares. Very pleasant her life with her Brother Frank had been, she said; for not one unkind word had ever passed between them. So that now she mourned for him with a gentle sorrow; a sorrow redeemed of all bitterness by the thought of the happiness they had shared together.

Maud's eyes filled with tears as she read. She already felt love for her Aunt Anna. She knew that with her she would find courtesy, kindness, she doubted not, love. But it grieved her in that moment of her resolve to go forth, that she had never been enabled to find them in her father's house. She had so longed that her life there should be beautified by the beautiful life of parents, and sister; by all the loving kindness they would show to her, and she to them; by the songs in which she and her sister would join their voices, and by the dear strolls they would have, arm-in-arm, along the pleasant places; by a fellow-feeling, clear and broad as heaven, with

their neighbors, and they with her. Oh, God, that she might taste all this and know it experimentally just one day, and then she could go with a lighter heart! She could know then and be supremely blest in knowing, that they all, Henry and all, felt kindly toward the poor, unattractive Maud, who had taken herself out of their way.

"What does she say? Does she want you to go?" asked Mrs. Garrison, at length, breaking in upon Maud's reflections.

"Yes; she wants me to go," Maud replied, with a choking voice. She extended the letter to her mother.

"Of course you'll go?" said Mrs. Garrison, when she had read it. "Your father thinks it best. We all do. We have all seen that you—why, that you like Henry Ainsworth full as well as he does you; full as well. But we know that he will marry Grace. Of course he'll marry her. He has shown that he has been thinking of it, ever since we came here. He knows—your father told him so, in a talk they had a few days ago—that Grace will have a thousand dollars any time that she marries in a way to suit him. And that she'll have all we've got some day. I mean, of course, Miss Maud—for you look frightened, as if you had all the world to lose—I mean all but the little that is left for you of your mother's property. You must know that this isn't much. Your education and bringing up have taken almost all of it. Your father told Henry so—it came in handy, when they were talking——; and Henry, your father said, looked as if it pleased him, hearing that Grace will have so much. This shows, if there was nothing else, that Henry knows what he means, coming here so often, and paying so much attention to Grace. I don't think you could bear it very well, seeing things go on; and so I think you better go to Anna. What do you think?"

"I think I had better go," wiping her tears, and folding her letter to go to her room. "If I could feel that you all love me, mother, I could stay and see anything go on, and be the happiest creature on earth! I could bear anything else, if I could just be loved dearly by my own family!" She spoke with an earnestness and dignity, before which her mother-in-law dropped her eyes. She turned away a little, said some indistinct things about "liking her well enough, as to that; but liking her own daughter best, of course."

CHAPTER V.

Mrs. GARRISON helped Maud, Grace helped her; Mr. Garrison bade his hired man carry her

over to the S—— station any time that she was ready, so that on the second day morning after getting her aunt's letter, she was ready to go to her. She ran in to see a few poor families, to whom she had made herself dear by her sympathy, she rode over to kiss the hired man's baby once more, she looked after Henry as he passed up the street, until he was out of sight, said—"good-bye" to her father as he hurried along the hall, and to her mother and sister, as they stood within the door with folded arms, to see her go; then she drew her thick veil over her face, and that was the last of Maud at J——.

But one could not see that any new comfort came to them because she was gone, long and eagerly as they had wished for that day. Mr. Garrison tumbled the steak over in the dish, at dinner; rapped the hard crust of the bread with his knife-blade; looked over into the pudding dish, and then pushed it farther from him; tried the apple-butter, and then rejected it, as if for some reason it were hateful to him; left his coffee untasted and was gone; without having once spoken. Mrs. Garrison was cross to the help, and, some way, had bad luck all around. Grace too had petulance, and what she was accustomed to call "the fidgets." She went from room to room, from window to window; and at last sat down at a window looking up Henry Ainsworth's way and pouted regularly.

Wonder how it was with the wanderer, Maud, by that time. Why, at that time (it was just at sunset, and a splendid sky came into the western view from Aunt Anna's parlor) Maud sat in a rocker large enough for two Mauds, of black walnut and black velvet; not rocking, not thinking of rocking, but leaning a little over one of the arms to talk with Aunt Anna. Aunt Anna was a splendid woman of fifty, (lacking eight days) who somehow made Maud think of Miss Edgeworth, in everything she said and did; perhaps because she read that lady's work so much, and with such quiet enjoyment. She wore a jet black dress, very long, very wide and very rich; and snow white collar, cap and under-sleeves. She spoke and moved with a great deal of dignity; and, at the same time, with a great deal of sweetness and grace. She had loving tones, a loving glance for Maud. She talked with her of her mother, whom she had loved with a love stronger than death. She had a subdued voice and tearful eyes when she recounted the instances of her gentle worth. Of Maud's father and her mother-in-law, she had little to say. She had visited them but once since their marriage, she said; partly because her home had been so far, partly because her last visit, paid

soon after the marriage, was not a happy one. This was all she said; but her looks were sad, as if the thought of them troubled her. She began talking of the coming festival; of the measures she had been taking to make it delightful. She led her to the pantry to see the beautiful frosted loaves and little cakes of cunningly devised forms—Chloe's work all of them; and to the garden walks along which were magnificent plants, some of them just received from nurseries, and set into the earth in their vases; to a far-off, out-of-the-way part of the garden, beyond the graceful brook that had such tiny bridges spanning it here and there; beyond the summer-house, where by this time clusters of grapes were luxuriantly hanging; a little beyond this, right there amongst the willows and cedars, where the jet went up from the throat of a swan, and came back deluging the same swan and the goddess on whose shoulder he sat; she led Maud there, and Maud could not speak, could hardly breathe for all the beauty she saw. The winding brook was close by, with the richest mosses—all in a glow, they were—along the banks; and, close by, beneath where a willow drooped, was a broad, and in some parts high, irregular rock. Mosses covered a part of it like a soft cushion, and over the other side ivy ran of Aunt Anna's training. She had brought it with her from their garden at Cleveland, because that, of all others, was her brother's favored plant. There was not a branch of it, whose direction he had not watched and guided. The housekeeper Chloe's husband was Aunt Anna's gardener. His name was Jaques. He was named for the Jaques of L'Ouverture's time. But he was the slowest, happiest man! Chloe was always laughing to see how slow he was. She ran over him. She could very well have managed both house and garden, whereas the garden alone was something of a puzzle to Jaques, so many paths, so many beds of so many shapes, so many leaves falling and hiding in the borders, the box figures outgrowing any child in the neighborhood! ha! how could any man, black or white, keep up with things! Then he took a few hurried steps; but so irregular they were, that Chloe sat down in the middle of the floor to laugh at them. He looked down on her, with his white teeth gleaming, called her a bad wife, and then went with slow steps and a slow song, a sweetly modulated song, withal, to his gardening.

CHAPTER VI.

AUNT ANNA made no comments upon Maud's poorly supplied wardrobe; but she brought beautiful fabrics and the skilfullest seamstress of

Worcester to make them into—a morning dress of gingham, very prettily embroidered; a dress for the birthday of lawn, with far-flowing skirt and rich blond accompaniments; and a dress for the church and for visiting of costliest silk. She gave her her own jewels that she wore before she went into mourning; and bonnet, shawl and gloves came by express from New York. Uncle Ben sent them. They were his present to his niece. On the noon of the birthday, he would present himself there, he said; and he bade Anna have some corn meal in her store-room; that, the next day after he came, he might taste a good old-fashioned Indian pudding, just such as they and Maud's mother used to taste at the homestead in their good mother's day. He could never get such a thing in the great boarding-house. Faith! he wished he had been wiser when he was younger. If he could live his time over again, he would take hold of the plump hand of Rose Morgan that was—now Mrs. John Brown—and lead her to his mother. To Rose he would say—"Rose, dear, learn of her how to make my table and home comfortable;" and to his mother—"teach her mother, that I may have somebody left when you are gone."

Uncle Ben came to the fete and was the life of that large, distinguished company. He had seen Maud a few times when she was a child. Not often then, and not at all for several years. It made him too angry going there and seeing how the persecutions of the mother were visited now upon her orphan; trebled, indeed, by the superadded influence of the mother-in-law and the imperious Miss Grace. He couldn't stand that, he muttered between his teeth—for want of a close friend to say it to—and determined to go there no more.

Now he could not take his eyes away from Maud, and seemed happy as a child in seeing her there; in seeing her so comfortable, so elegant—for our Maud was a fine woman, a radiant woman, in the new life and light that beamed upon her there amidst so much that was excellent in beauty, in intelligence, and in all manner of noble accomplishments. It did his generous soul good to see that she would directly be a favorite of the best people there; of the best old people and the best young people. He had not a little father-like pride in this. As for Aunt Anna, she had never known a happier day; it made her heart so grateful, so warm, seeing the new creature of her love show herself so worthy, so superior in womanly dignity and intelligence, wherever she moved, with whomsoever she talked. But when she spoke of her happiness the next morning at breakfast, a gentle sadness came over her features, and

she sat a few moments thoughtful and silent. It was often thus in the midst of her most grateful moments; for in those moments she regretted most the kind one who had passed away. Uncle Ben understood her and spoke to her with added gentleness; while Maud, with tears in her eyes, renewed her inward vow of love and watchful care.

Well, other parties, and rides and walks followed close upon Aunt Anna's birthday. They were hurried forward, not only that Maud might at once feel at home with them, and see at once their beautiful scenery, but that Uncle Ben, the lively, genial-hearted "old bachelor," might be there to share them. He kept staying, therefore. He growled sometimes about his business going crazy with him away so long; but matrons and grave gentlemen said—"one more day, Mr. Lancaster, and then we won't say another word." Beautiful young girls fluttered round him, reached up to his buttons and played with them as they begged him to "keep still! to be still scolding and stay where he was—always! They would rather half of Worcester would go than he. They wouldn't let him go; so he might as well be good-natured and stay contentedly where he was."

Maud's quiet eyes on his face besought him to be with them still longer. Aunt Anna promised him another pudding, or corn-cakes, or cream-cakes, just such as their mother used to make; so that he smacked his lips and stayed; sat down to write fresh directions to his partner and head clerk, and then went like a good breeze through the house, through the neighborhood, glad enough to stay to taste the delicious dishes; to watch Maud seeing to the rips in his dressing-gown and gloves, as if she were his daughter; and to meet once again the pleasant people who had such cordial friendliness for him, such excellent devices for making one's time glide smoothly.

CHAPTER VII.

It must not be supposed that Maud had utterly forgotten her old want, the old besetting disquiet of her days at J—. In the clear daylight, when friends were about her, she could easily let the memory go, if it came. She was a little saddened by it, for a moment, but she could bear to think that it was all over between herself and every mortal at J—, Henry Ainsworth and all; that she would see them, hear from them no more; that there at Worcester she would begin her life anew. But at night she wept at the thought; and longed, as if she must die, to be loved and honored by them all; most of all, by her father and Henry; far most of all, by Henry.

Then her life at Worcester would be, as it were, heaven upon earth. She wiped the tears at length, praying to be forgiven that she had murmured, promising her heart that soon the struggle would be over; for she would master the regret more and more, until it should be her servant, ministering to the gratefulness and comfort of her new life.

She had been already at Worcester a month, without a word of intelligence from J—, when, one day, her father's clerk came through the yard, reconnoitering every window, and every other feature of the house and yard, as he came. He met Maud with awkwardness; for he too, as her father's favorite man, had joined in oppressing her at J—. He had stopped over one train, on his way to New York, he said. He thought he could stop as well as not; and that she would like to hear how things were going on at J—. They were all well, he said; and especially Miss Grace. She was particularly well, he added, turning his eyes to Maud's face, but suddenly letting them fall again, on their meeting her's.

"She is well, in particular," repeated he, looking down on the watch-seal he was fumbling. "And what makes her, is, she's got Henry Ainsworth, I suppose, fast enough now. They all think she has. I suppose she has; she feels so nicely about it."

"Has Mrs. Ainsworth returned?" quietly asked Maud.

"Ah, yes; she's been back more 'n a week, I guess. Yes; she come back a week ago yesterday; *just* a week ago yesterday. And she wanted to see you when she come. I don't know what for; but I heard her asking a great many questions about you. She wanted to know most, when you were going home. I heard what they told her; but no use repeating it to you. You wouldn't feel any better toward them for it, I guess." Again he tried to look Maud in the face, but could not. He had renewed discomfiture soon in the entrance of Aunt Anna, whose polite and dignified reception quite overawed the poor chap. Visitors soon came in, young friends of Maud, who came to take her out with them; and from that moment, his embarrassment became quite pitiful to see. Maud tried to relieve him by her attention, by offers of refreshment; but he only perspired the more copiously, only found his large hands the more difficult to take care of; for even his yellow watch-seal, in which he had such glory at J—, was, as he felt, too mean a thing to be touched there amongst those elegantly dressed, high-bred people. So he crept and tumbled out, in the best way he could;

made his final bow and departed, without again attempting to lift his eyes to Maud's.

The next week Maud received a letter from Grace, which ran in this wise:—"I want to go to W—— and make Aunt Anna a visit, a long visit. I want to go in about a week; for then Mrs. Ainsworth and Henry are going to Norwich to spend his vacation with some relatives there. They want me to go with them. Father and mother want me to go, it will be such a good chance; and they both say, especially father, that you must come and take my place here, helping mother take care and so on, while I'm gone. They say you'd better start the same day we shall; I will write a day or two before, to let you know just when we shall go. Robert says you won't come. He says you have grown mighty haughty since you have been there. But of course you will come, since *father* says you must. And when mother wrote to Aunt Anna about your going, she intended all the time that we should take turns about being with her. Of course you'll come, if Aunt Anna ain't perfectly willing. She'll be willing enough after I've been there a little while, of course she will; for if she don't like me full *as well* as she does you, when she gets acquainted with me, she will be a little different from other folks, that's all.

"Father and mother send their respects to aunt. Mother wants me to tell her that she shall send me there with a good will; for she *knows* we shall like each other, and have grand times going round, and having Mrs. Ainsworth and Henry stop there a few days. Don't keep this to yourself, instead of telling it to her. I send my respects to her, GRACE GARRISON.

"Postscript.—Don't fail to be getting ready to come. You can go back again, you know, when I and Mrs. Ainsworth and Henry are ready to come back. We can cross each other again then just as we shall when we go."

Maud's comfort was all broken up by this unwelcome letter. Neither could Aunt Anna conceive by what species of diplomatic action she could let it be known at J—— that it was Maud she wanted and not Grace. She could easily have written and said so plainly; but she feared offending them, and thereby ensuring Maud's peremptory recall, if it must take place, not on Grace's account, but for the sole sake of retaliation, of giving her and Maud torment. She therefore wrote not at all to them, but despatched a note to Uncle Ben, requiring his presence at Worcester early the coming week. That accomplished, she was more at ease; she endeavored, moreover, to reassure Maud, by recounting instances of Uncle Ben's energetic perseverance in

that which he had undertaken. He had tact conjoined with strength of will; he always had had; so that he had always carried his measures through very much according to his wishes. She could, therefore, have confidence in his doing something for them, to help them through the emergency. She recommended the same confidence to Maud. And, finding that it did not come, she spoke of trust in heaven. Yes; this was the ark for the precious Maud! Not from a belief that anything would be moved or changed with special reference to her need and prayer. But she could rely upon the strength and patience of her own soul, if it might be sustained of God, if God would be with her helping her. It was good, however, to have the days pass, day after day, and no letter from J——. The old cheerfulness, the old interest in their pursuits were renewed by the opening of every mail, when it was seen that there could be no confirmation of their fear that day. And how good it was to see Uncle Ben scrambling through the gate in his vigorous way! He kissed them both on both cheeks, and stopped them right there in the shaded balcony to hear what the trouble was. He had a deepening frown every moment that the story went on; and when it was over, he sat a few minutes in silence, looking down on the play that went on between his cane and a sear leaf that had fallen on the matting at his feet.

"Well!" said he, giving the leaf a sweep that sent it beyond the matting and the steps, and lifting his head and his eyes, "you will not go, Maud. So be easy. Be easy, my Sister Anna; and come! go in now"—taking them along by a hand hold of the arm of each. "I'm half starving; haven't ate a mouthful since eight o'clock! Isn't it too bad?"

"Only our supper will taste so good!" said Aunt Anna, with kindling eyes, and going to order tea immediately, while Maud helped Uncle Ben dispose of his packages—he always had his hat and pockets and hands full of them; gifts they were mostly, picked up just as he started and on his way, for his sister and Maud. This time there were gifts also for Jaques and Chloe. Where were they? He would go and find them, and Maud must go with him. But they must gather up the packages and go quick! he was so hungry! half starved! Whew!

Yes; and so it was demonstrated there that day, that it really was not half so good for those two women to be alone, as to have a good and sensible creature like Uncle Ben about the house, making a racket, and overturning, for the time, all sorts of systems; not half so good. If there were only more Uncle Bens in the world! And

so no doubt there would be, if there were more Aunt Annas and Mauds.

CHAPTER VIII.

THAT evening, just as the sun made a splendid setting, while the little grey birds still hopped about in the branches, occasionally twittering, as if in accompaniment to the brook that tinkled below, Maud was in the garden, thinking how good Uncle Ben and Aunt Anna were to her, and training the vines about the entrance of the summer-house. She was very happy, she was thinking that she always would be happy after that, if she did see troubles on the way to her; if "the thick darkness" gathered about her ever so close, she would think how often it had been with her "the darkest just before it was day," and wait quietly for the morning. She heard quick steps coming, steps that she remembered. She had heard them with a beating heart many times beneath her windows at J—. She turned with a start, and there he was. There was Henry Ainsworth coming toward her, the good face beaming and the good voice saying—"Maud—Maud, this is indeed a pleasure!" He held her hand closely in his; in a moment he had it in both his, holding it to his beating heart. He looked from Maud's face abroad on the lovely scene, from the lovely scene back to Maud. He sighed gently, and held her hand closer and closer. Maud bent her head, still in silence. She had not yet spoken a word. She could find no words, for the agitation, the deep joy she felt. But it did not need that she should speak. The tears, the trembling were eloquent enough; and Henry interpreted them aright. He had long understood *himself*; he took her in his arms, therefore, calling her—his; his own beloved Maud.

Mrs. Ainsworth was with Henry. They had stopped at Worcester with a friend, at whose house they would spend a day or two before going on to Norwich. When the two days were over there, their portmanteaus were brought to Aunt Anna's; and happy days went on there. Aunt Anna and Mrs. Ainsworth sat and rocked and talked by the hour. There was no end to the cordial, sensible things they had to say to each other. Uncle Ben laid his hand on Henry's shoulder and took him one way and another. He liked the good young man, who had such quiet self-possession at all times; who was not afraid to take Maud, poor as they both were, for the trust he had in his ability to serve both himself and her. He liked him! If he had a daughter, more precious than the apple of his

eyes to him, he would gladly and with pride give her to so thoroughly sensible a man. Maud said little; she had never been so still. It was enough for her to see Henry near; to listen to the voice better than all the music on earth to her; and to mark the growing esteem her relatives felt for him, and he for them; to mark how this esteem spread through the neighborhood; how the best men and women in that rich old town, felt it good and pleasant for them to come within the circle of his genial influence.

One thing more and our long story is told. Henry brought along from Grace a letter for Maud. He did not think of it until he came across it in rummaging a port-folio, after he had been several days at Worcester; and we have been equally remiss in overlooking it down to this late stage of affairs. She wrote—"I am madder than any cat; for our hired man, after father turned him away for saying something that mother didn't like about your going away, told Henry, or Mr. Ainsworth, as I shall call him after this day, a great mess of stuff that mother and I had been doing all along, to keep Henry—Mr. Ainsworth, that is, from liking you; and to make him like me. The man lied. So we told Henry. He just bowed to it; and kept bowing, as we kept explaining, until I hated him, and wanted to put my foot on him. This is the reason I don't go to Worcester with them. I would sooner go with two tomahawks. But I want to go by the time they get back here. I don't want to be in the same place with them. I don't want to be in this house—that is, until father and mother forget this bad business a little. They are both so cross! It makes me wish I was five hundred miles away. You needn't come home if I do go. I should want you to be there too; for I shouldn't be much company for Aunt Anna till I feel ever so much better spirited than I do now. And, besides, somehow I want to see you, Maud. I am beginning to think that, after all, there ain't many who are so good-tempered as you, and who would all through every thing, use me so well. I am coming, Maud, as true as I live! But it makes me feel better. I feel better for saying what I have in the few last lines to you. I should feel a great deal better, if I only knew now, when I am so lonesome, that you like me a little, and will try to be a little glad to see me, if I do go to Worcester.

"Won't you write to me and tell me if you and your Aunt Anna would like to have me go, by-and-bye, after Henry and his mother come back? I will go and ask mother if she has any word to send to you. I have been; and she too cried, and told me to tell you that she wishes

you would come back; and that father wishes it too. Perhaps you will come and stay a while instead of my going to Worcester. I could get through with it, I think, if you were here. I wish you would come back and marry Henry, and let me help you fix your things and do ever so much for you. I *wish* you would. I should feel better, if I could do something to help both of you, and to make father feel better toward mother and me. Do come! come back with them; and nobody will be so glad as your sister

GRACE."

Was it not too bad in Henry, too bad in us neglecting poor Grace's letter so long? Maud did not neglect it a moment. She carried it to her room and answered it with streaming eyes, and a heart overflowing with love for father, mother-in-law, sister, and with longing to be with them for a little time in her other, her earlier home.

She is there now. She sits with her Sister Grace with fingers moving nimbly over fine bedding and fine table linen, and all manner of embroidery of quilts and curtains and chairs. Henry comes in and reads to them, and helps Mr. Garrison arrange matters for a sumptuous bridal.

The last named gentleman watches Maud with tears in his eyes, and can never do enough for her. She loves him—never a daughter loved her father so intensely. Mrs. Garrison is tired of her old bitterness. Her wonder is, that she ever spoilt all her true comfort indulging it; and she works now willingly, early and late, to make things comfortable for all in the house, and especially for Maud who is so soon to leave it, and who hitherto, poor girl, has had so little pleasure there.

One thing more, and then we are certainly done. Have my readers seen the new building that the friends of education are rearing at Worcester? If so they have seen a gem of artistic beauty and quaintness. They have seen, moreover, the spot where Henry Ainsworth is to dispense Latin and Greek and Spanish, until he shall have saved enough out of the most liberal salary with which he is to be established there, to enable him to go to Europe for a long residence, and Maud with him. They both long intensely to go; not simply to see, not simply to hear, not simply to be moving from land to land; but that their innermost life may be forever enriched and beautified.

WISDOM AND PLEASURE.

BY IRENE NORWOOD

I HAD taken a long ramble in the old woods in the rear of Norwood cottage, and returning greatly fatigued, I threw myself into a softly cushioned chair by the large bow window in the old hall, and gave way to the most delicious reveries, as I gazed on the varied landscape of hill and dale which was spread in a vivid diorama before me. The old woods had doffed their emerald coats, and arrayed themselves in the richest liveries of scarlet and gold; the sky was of that deep blue, so peculiar to the fall of the year; here and there a few white clouds, light and fleecy as an angel's wing, floated through the azure sea; the setting sun spread a rosy tint through the atmosphere, bathing in its mellow flood the lovely scene.

I gazed until a mistiness stole over my eyes; the low murmur of voices ceased, even my Cousin Clara's merry laugh died away; the world was forgotten, and I stood in the land of forgetfulness.

Methought I stood in the entrance of an umbrageous wood. Around me, all was light and beautiful. Birds of every variety, and the most brilliant plumage, flitted from tree to tree, and warbled forth their sweet songs of praise. The azure vault of heaven was perfectly cloudless, and the clear and limpid brook as it leapt merrily by, filled the air with sweet music. Within those woods all seemed dark and impenetrable. No sound was heard save the fall as of many waters. I turned away saying, "it is not for me to sound its depths; it is not for me to search its inmost recesses."

But how shall I describe the scene that met my view?

Before me lay a wide, extended plain covered with the most delicate flowers, and luxuriant grass. Numerous little streams meandered through the plain, but as I watched their progress, they appeared to mingle and form one wide, dark river at the extremity of the plain. A broad way wound through the plain, bordered with the most beautiful trees and aromatic shrubs, and—but words cannot pourtray that scene. No artist's pencil can delineate its beauties.

Then I saw a little child come forth from that avenue—so fair, so lovely, so ethereal, me-

thought her a fit inhabitant of that lovely spot. As she advanced, flowers more beautiful than any I had ever seen, seemed to spring from beneath her feet. All that the imagination can paint, or the heart wish for, clustered around her, to render her if possible more beautiful.

Just then I heard a low, coarse voice behind me, saying, "beware, beware."

I turned, and such a loathsome object as met my view! 'She was an old woman, of small stature, keen, piercing eyes, sallow complexion, her garments soiled, and her whole frame shook with the palsy.

I sickened at the sight and turned abruptly away. Pleasure, for such was her name, had now reached me. "Come with me," she said, in tones so musical, that I involuntarily followed. Again that sepulchral voice cried, "beware!" but I heeded not.

Following Pleasure to the entrance of the avenue, she showed me a splendid mansion in the distance. It was built of the richest variegated marble. The clear sapphire domes parkled in the morning sun, reflecting its prismatic rays on the surface below. Light, aerial forms danced on the velvet lawn, and numerous fountains sparkled as diamonds beneath the refulgent rays of the orb of day. All that could please the eye and delight the senses seemed concentrated there.

"Follow me, and that shall be your reward." Wild with joy I hastened on, but that mysterious word "beware" still rang in my ears.

What, thought I, can there be about this beautiful creature to cause hesitation?

It was with difficulty that I could overtake my guide, who as she hastened on appeared to elude me. I could scarcely keep sight of her, and the beautiful mansion appeared fainter, and at a greater distance than at first.

Again that strange form appeared to me, again that hollow voice cried, "beware."

Although I hurried on without heeding her, yet I thought as I cast a passing glance toward her, there was more than usual earnestness in her manner, and a settled resolve in the calmness of her eye; her whole appearance also, seemed less disagreeable than at first. I felt half inclined to turn and follow her, but meeting the

resistless eye of Pleasure, I hastened onward. The way became more rugged, and I often lost sight of my guide, among the numerous hills and rocky mounds we were obliged to ascend and descend. The castle, the sole object of my once pleasant but fast becoming dreary and even disagreeable walk, had entirely faded from my view. My feet were lacerated and were bleeding profusely from stepping on the sharp stones. No fragrant flower bloomed in that rugged soil; no verdant trees afforded shelter from the scorching rays of the mid-day sun; no gentle zephyr fanned my burning cheek; I heard not the limpid, laughing brook, but I occasionally caught glimpses of a dark, turbid stream, and the chilly, damp, and even noisome air that was wafted toward me, caused me to shudder.

I looked for my guide. She was far, far away on a rocky promontory that seemed to overhang that dark river. In my despair I sat down and wept. It was then that I heard a low, sweet voice, and though I recognized the same accents I had heard before, it was a sweet, soothing tone, say, "come unto me weary one, and I will give you rest."

It was a balm to the wounded heart. "There is rest, rest for the weary;" oh, how sweet was the thought! Rest! rest! Looking up I beheld Pleasure very near me. I sought for my comforter, but she was not there. Again I listened to the voice of the charmer, and was cruelly deceived. Faint and weary, I longed for a resting-place. I thought of those sweet words I had heard before, but it seemed the beguiling voice of Pleasure.

I had torn my garments in the vain hope of easing my bleeding feet by binding them up. I arose and attempted to go on, but worn and weary as I was it was next to impossible. My soul loathed the beauties I had foolishly promised myself at the commencement of my journey. With Pleasure I was disgusted. She stole near me and attempted to lure me on; she unfolded new beauties to my gaze, but I felt that it was an empty misage that would vanish on my approach. I now knew the meaning of that warning voice, "beware," and bitterly did I deplore the hour in which I turned with rudeness from that well meaning, truthful creature, disgusting as she then seemed. "Oh, that I were as in days passed," I exclaimed. "Oh, for the fountain of life that I might slake my burning thirst, that I might drink, and drink, and thirst no more."

A low, sweet voice beside me responded, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. Whosoever shall drink of the water that I shall give him,

shall thirst no more, but it shall be in him a well of water springing up unto everlasting life."

I started and gazed around me; could this be the form I had thought so hideous? Could this being clothed with heavenly radiance, extending to my weary spirit the hope of rest; holding the olive branch of peace to my weary and conflicting mind; could this be Wisdom? the being whom I looked upon as possessing all that was wretched and miserable, and who stood at the gate of the avenue of life, to lure unwary travellers to partake of her wretchedness.

Ah! Pleasure had spread a glossing over my eyes, and taught me to look upon sin as beautiful; to consider the path of wisdom as a dreary, monotonous one; one which when mature years were mine, it would do for me to tread.

"Oh, give me to drink of that water, that I may thirst no more."

"Follow me." She led me away from the road I was in. Beautiful flowers and sweet shrubs sprang in my pathway, which as I trod upon them turned to hissing serpents and tangled brambles; the beguiling voice of Pleasure sounded in my ear, "here is rest." The way was difficult, and feign would I have submitted to my bondage again, but Wisdom turned her meek, reproachful eyes upon me, and extended her hand affectionately toward me. The way became easier, and soon I found myself in a straight and narrow path; and a short distance before me was the cross, around which shone the halo of divinity. I threw myself at its foot, and rose not until a sweet peace stole into my heart, and I felt that rest was near. I hastened on, and ere long caught a glimpse of that dark river, at whose brink my path seemed to terminate. Already a chilliness stole over me, and I knew that it was the river of Death. I pressed on, and now I stood on its brink. Fearfully it rolled on, and I must either plunge in to rise no more or swim to the opposite shore, which appeared clothed in living green. Oh, what a happy land did that seem! Surely methought it is the land of rest.

Then I saw my Saviour with a sweet smile on his heavenly features, and a crown in his hand. Fearlessly I plunged in, and—awoke.

A sweet peace pervaded my frame. I asked myself, "can this be all a dream? Can it be but one of the illusions of fancy that cross life's pathway with the mere semblance of reality?" A voice within me answered, "no!" I asked again, "is it all a dream?" A voice, reader, it was the same voice I had heard in my dream; a voice from the upper air responded, "no!"

"The ways of wisdom are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace."

THE MORTGAGOR'S DAUGHTER.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "THE VALLEY FARM," "DORA ATHERTON," &C.

[Entered, according to the Act of Congress, in the year 1853, by Charles J. Peterson, as the proprietor, in the Clerk's Office, of the District Court of the U. S., in the Eastern District of Pennsylvania.]

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 88.

IV.—THE PARTY.

THE mansion of Mrs. Rawlson was one of the most elegant on Chesnut street. Two spacious parlors, separated by folding doors, and with lofty ceilings ornamented in stucco, were filled with sumptuous furniture. The carpet was an Axminster of the richest pattern. Curtains of damask and lace hung at the windows. The cabinet-ware of mahogany, was elaborately carved, and often inlaid with satin wood. The rooms were without pictures, but relieved by French paper in high colors; and in the recesses against the walls, were small oval mirrors with candleabra attached to them. On the massive mantels, which projected far out, stood large griandoles, with heavy cut-glass pendants, while chandeliers to correspond depended from the ceilings, their glittering drops tinkling whenever a current of air swept by from a door opened too suddenly.

On a cold winter day, about twilight, during the same month that saw the expulsion of the Foresters, two females sat in these stately parlors, before a generous fire. The anthracite had just been heaped up anew in the polished steel grate, so that though the lower part of the mass glowed intensely, the upper part and top were black as ebony, except when, here and there, the blue flame shot up between the bits of coal to vanish immediately. The lady who sat on the right, was Mrs. Rawlson herself. She was a widow of middle age, somewhat large in person, and with a countenance indicative rather of good cheer than of intellectual culture. Her feet were on the shining brass fender, and her eyes fixed on the genial fire; but she was evidently not even in a reverie; the mere physical sensation of warmth was the utmost that she was capable of at that moment.

On the left of the grate, however, was a younger lady, a fair, fashionable creature, the very ideal of languid loveliness. Her blue eyes, light brown hair, and slim aristocratic figure; the accompanying dress of the latest style; the air of graceful indolence with which she sat; even the listless look which she directed to the

fire, were all in keeping. Occasionally she played with the tiny watch-seals, which it was then the fashion for ladies to wear; and occasionally yawned slightly. This was Clara Owens, the usurer's daughter.

"Aunt Charlotte," she said, at last, languidly removing her eyes from the grate, "do tell me what to wear to-night. I really cannot decide."

"Say rather that it is too much trouble for you," replied her aunt, laughingly. "I wonder if you ever dressed for a party, Clara, without appealing to me to make up your mind first. Pray, do you expect me to choose a husband for you too?"

"I really don't know," said the young lady, dropping her eyes, while the faintest possible color tinged her cheek, as if she was too indolent even to blush heartily; and she added, looking at her little filagree seals, "I suppose you'd select for me this Mr. Manderson, whom you were talking about at breakfast."

"And whose mother's party we go to, this evening," briskly replied Mrs. Rawlson, rousing fairly up from her state of torpor, half rising, and settling her garments with a rustle as she resumed her chair. "Well, Clara, I don't know, but what I would. I see you've been thinking about him, and are, perhaps, half in love with him, like the rest of the girls. You must put on your most becoming dress, for Charles is a great critic in such matters. He was, at least, before he went abroad; and his ten years travel have not rendered him less fastidious, I dare say."

"How proud Mrs. Manderson seems of him," said the niece, thoughtfully, after a pause. "I don't remember him at all."

"I met him, yesterday, when I went out alone. He was always strikingly handsome, but he has now in addition the air *distingue*: one would take him for D'Orsay, as Mrs. Harrison says, if he was only more of a dandy. You must appropriate him, my dear; you can, if you'll only exert yourself: with your beauty, style, accomplishments, and fortune no man can resist you, if you are in earnest. The girls were

all in love with him before she went away, but his mother says he was heart whole; and I remember he seemed very indifferent, receiving all their homage as if it was his due. But," continued Mrs. Rawlson, "what about the dress? Blue, white, or pink shall it be?"

"Don't you think my blue *crepe lisse* the most becoming: with my pearl bracelets, and that wreath of white moss-rose-buds."

"Yes! you will look *charmante* in that. By the way, Clara, you should have brushed up your French for Mr. Manderson's benefit. You really must marry him. I don't know anybody I should like so much for a nephew. But come, it is time you were thinking of dress: you must look perfectly bewitching to-night: so there is no time to lose."

The taste of Clara Owens in dress was always fastidious; but on this night she seemed not only difficult, but absolutely impossible to please. The white moss-rose-buds were either too far forward, or too far back on her head; the more fully developed roses in her *bouquet de corsage* were replaced by a pearl pin, to which was attached a diamond cross; and when, at last, she stepped into the carriage, she wondered if Charles Manderson would think her dress too elaborate, and half repented she had not worn the white flowers left on her dressing-table, instead of the pearls and diamonds.

Carriage after carriage was thundering up, setting down its freight, and rolling away, when Clara and her aunt reached Mrs. Manderson's. As the obsequious footman, bowing low, threw open the door leading from the vestibule into the hall, the scent of a thousand perfumes, among which were those of the many rare exotic plants ranged along the wall and on the landings of the stairs, greeted the new guests. The rooms appeared to be already nearly filled, and dancing had begun: the very air seemed dizzy, indeed, with the whirling music. Tripping lightly along, for she was now in her element, and inspired, as it were, by the exhilarating sounds, Clara preceded her more stately moving aunt, between files of servants, to the dressing-room up stairs, where, after nearly half an hour, she emerged again, but in a flutter of spirits indescribable, for everybody there was talking of the hero of the evening, and Clara heard him described by all as such a paragon that she grew more nervous than ever about her dress.

But when she reached the parlors, had made her way through the crush to Mrs. Manderson, had paid her respects, had begun to take heart and look around, there was no one visible who she could persuade herself was he who had

occupied so much of her thoughts. Two winters in society had rendered her familiar with nearly every face, and of the few strangers present, not one came up to her ideal of Charles Manderson. She was turning to her aunt, with a feeling of disappointment, when she heard a deep, rich, manly voice behind her, saying,

"How do you do, Mrs. Rawlson? I am very glad to see you again. I caught but a glimpse of you, as you rolled by in your carriage yesterday. Positively, you look younger than ever."

By this time the speaker was shaking hands with her aunt, and stood directly in front of the two ladies, so that Clara without any exhibition of curiosity, could examine him at leisure. His person was tall and commanding, yet graceful extremely: and he was dressed with much care, though quite simply. But it was his face which particularly arrested her. To say that it was handsome would give but an insufficient idea of it; for to eminently noble features was added a lofty, yet engaging expression: Clara was not the girl to analyze it, but she felt nevertheless the influence of that majestic forehead, and of those eloquent eyes; and, as he turned, obedient to a movement of her aunt's, and looked at her with that calm, penetrating gaze of his, not unmixed with something of surprise at her loveliness, she felt her heart throb against her bodice violently, and dropped her lashes on her cheek with a blush, that crimsoning her to the bosom, heightened her beauty more than all her art could have done.

"My niece, Miss Owens—Mr. Manderson," said Mrs. Rawlson, introducing them.

"I am most happy to meet one, of whom I have heard my mother speak so much," said the gentleman, bowing, and seeking Clara's eyes. "I have been looking for you," he continued, turning to the aunt. "You have just arrived, I believe. I hope your niece is not yet engaged for the next set." And again his eyes sought Clara's. "May I have the honor of your hand, Miss Owens, in the quadrille which is forming?"

Clara murmured a low assent, glanced shyly up, held out the tips of her gloved fingers, and found herself, the next moment, standing up with Charles Manderson, the envy of half the room.

"Are you fond of waltzing, Miss Owens?" said her partner, as they waited for the sets to be completed.

"Oh! passionately," was the reply.

He smiled slightly at this extravagance of language, but answered immediately,

"Certainly no more beautiful sight can be, than two young girls, in their light dresses,

floating around the room to music. But I must confess that if I had a sister, or a wife, I should dislike to see her waltzing with a gentleman, especially one who was a mere acquaintance."

Clara looked up in some wonder, her large blue eyes wide open.

"But its the most common thing in the world," was her reply, for her fashionable education made her think that what every one did was quite right. Then, as if she had been too bold, she looked down, and affected to be fastening her pin.

"Well, well," was the laughing answer, "I suppose I am very old-fashioned. But seriously, I don't see how a man can marry a woman, after he has seen her supported around a room, in a waltz, by every whiskered dandy of the day."

The music, striking up, interrupted the conversation at this point, nor was there an opportunity to resume it till the quadrille was finished. But then Manderson, leading Clara to a lounge, by a table covered with engravings, began to talk about pictures, curious to see if his companion was as intelligent as she was lovely. The engravings consisted of views of every country. The silver lake of Como, the sun-lighted bay of Naples, the thymey hills of Greece were all there; and in addition many a picturesque landscape more. Besides these, were castles, ruined abbeys, venerable cathedrals, beautiful women in national costumes, bare-legged peasant children, in short all that had the poetry of beauty or association connected with it.

Clara had read largely for a fashionably bred girl, chiefly in novels, travels and the lighter sort of history however. She could talk, when animated, in a manner to suggest the possession of even more knowledge than she really had: so that Manderson soon became interested, she was so much more agreeable than he had expected. He observed, nevertheless, that she dwelt longer on the costumes of the women than on the landscapes or the glorious old land-marks of Europe.

"You are not very fond of the country?" he said.

"No," she answered. "It is many years since I lived there, and when I go for a week or two in the summer, I am *ennuyed* to death, for I have no society at all, and papa is always in the counting-room."

The fine eyes of Manderson lost a little of their undisguised admiration.

"If it was not that my mother prefers the city," he said, "I believe I should settle quietly down in some pretty little place in the country, contentedly for life." And he proceeded to expatiate so eloquently on nature, and on the free,

generous life of the country, that the facile Clara soon began to wonder at her own blindness in not liking such scenes more. By the time he had finished his rhapsody, it became necessary to leave her, however, in order to attend to others of his mother's guests.

Clara remained sitting, mechanically turning over the prints, and still thinking of waving grass, genial sunshine, and breezy uplands, when one of her many admirers approached. Harry Elwood had everything to recommend him, in the eyes of the frivolous circle in which he moved: for he was rich, well-born, and handsome; and so mothers considered him an excellent match, and daughters bridled up with smiles at his approach, though he was known to be selfish, heartless, and unprincipled, and his male companions whispered even worse. He had long had an eye to Clara's fortune, and never doubted but that, when he proposed, she would accept him thankfully. Having chanced to hear the conversation about waltzing, and disliking Manderson heartily, whom he called a "saint," he now approached with a self-satisfied air, to lead Clara out, as he had often done before. What was his amazement to be refused. Incredulous he repeated his request. But Clara replied more decidedly than before, that she never waltzed with gentlemen. An angry flush shot over her hearer's cheek, for an instant, for he comprehended all, and knew that he had a dangerous rival. With a hearty curse, politely stifled between his teeth, he turned on his heel, and left Clara, unconscious of what she had done, to return to her reverie.

Manderson, meanwhile, saw, with secret respect, what he thought a proof of Clara's dignity; and his admiration was not lessened when, on her waltzing with a female friend, he beheld how gracefully she floated around the room, and how evidently she enjoyed the intoxicating pastime. Before the evening was over, therefore, he claimed Clara's hand again for a quadrille, and when supper was announced, gave her his arm to the table. She was naturally in the highest spirits at this marked preference, and looked both prettier and talked more animatedly than she had ever been known to before.

When the party had broken up and the guests departed, Manderson said to his mother, as they chatted of the events of the evening,

"What a soft, blue eye Miss Owens has, and how graceful her every movement."

"You are half in love already, Charles," laughingly said Mrs. Manderson.

"I am not in love, nor shall I be easily," he replied, seriously, "though I confess that I like

Miss Owens better than I expected. It is a pity that so good a heart, and so amiable a disposition, should be perverted by a frivolous education."

"Your influence might remedy that."

He shook his head.

"She is very rich," persisted Mrs. Manderson, "and you ought to marry an heiress, you know. My fortune is not large, and you get nothing till my death."

"Which makes me hope never to get anything," said he, kissing his parent. "May you live a century yet, dear mother."

When the carriage of Mrs. Rawlson drove off, the aunt said to her niece,

"Well, Clara, what do you think of your new admirer?"

It was fortunate for Clara that the darkness concealed her blushes. She waited a moment so that her voice should not betray her, and then answered, with affected nonchalance,

"Oh! I'm not sure he is an admirer. It's the fashion abroad, you know, aunt, for gentlemen to be very attentive; and he hasn't sunk back yet into the Blue Beards that all American beaux are."

The aunt smiled to herself; for she was not to be cheated by Miss Clara; but like a practised match-maker, as she was, said no more.

V.—THE OPERA.

ONE morning, a few days after the party, Mrs. Rawlson and her niece were lounging over a late breakfast; the elder lady idly balancing her teaspoon on the edge of her cup; the younger crumbling a bit of roll into a saucer of milk, and calling her little King Charles spaniel, to take him in her lap and feed him.

"Here, Cora, you have eaten as much breakfast as I did," said Clara, finally, as she placed the saucer on the table. But she still retained the dog in her lap, abstractedly stroking its long black silken ears.

At last the little French clock on the mantel mincingly struck ten.

"I declare its almost time to dress," said the young girl, rousing with a start; and, giving a slight yawn, she said, "what are you going to do this morning, Aunt Charlotte?"

"I have got half a headache, but I think we ought to make some calls, and leave our cards at Mrs. Manderson's." As she spoke, she looked toward Clara. The latter blushed.

"We have not been there since the party," replied Clara, without raising her eyes from the dog, but feeling instinctively that her aunt was regarding her, and waiting for her to speak.

"Well, we will go there then. You have but to be in earnest, love, as I told you before; and Charles Manderson is sure to be yours. When I, a half-bred country girl, came to town with your mother, on her wedding tour, and met Mr. Rawlson, I hadn't half the chance you have: but I made up my mind to have him; and you see where I am now: in the first society, and with a nice income, my dear. Why, with your fortune and education, you ought to catch Charles Manderson right off, that you ought."

Mrs. Rawlson, when in earnest, often used unconsciously the rustic phrases of her youth, as she did now.

Clara still did not look up: but at last she said,

"I like Mr. Manderson very much, aunt, for I see that is what you wish to discover. He seems so different from other men one meets; you feel instinctively he is a gentleman, not only in manner, but at heart." Here she raised her eyes, full of enthusiasm to her aunt. "How intelligent he is too."

"You shall have my diamonds reset for the wedding," exclaimed Mrs. Rawlson, delightedly, as she rose from her chair. "I always knew you would make a brilliant match. The Mandersons are not only rich, indeed; but the family is first-rate."

Clara was a long time deciding whether her carriage dress should be her white bonnet with plumes, and her new camel's hair shawl for which her father had just paid a thousand dollars; or her pink hat with the velvet wreath of ivy leaves, and her brown velvet cloak covered with embroidery. The white bonnet and shawl, however, carried the day: and Clara stepped out of the carriage, at Mrs. Manderson's, conscious of looking her very best.

When the two ladies entered, they found not only Mrs. Manderson, but her son. The latter was talking, in the gayest spirits, to some young ladies, who, like Clara, had called on his mother. He handed Clara a seat, and continued his conversation; at which the new guest felt a pang of something very like jealousy.

"Yes," he said, "I shall have to be more attentive to my bride now."

Clara, astonished beyond measure, cried unguardedly,

"Your bride!"

"Yes," replied he, while there was a general laugh, in which all joined but himself and the mortified girl, "my bride, Lady Law."

Clara was more mystified than ever, and could not conceal it, in spite of her embarrassed blushes.

"Oh! I beg pardon," said Manderson, ap-

proaching her respectfully. "You didn't hear the first part of the conversation. I was educated for the bar, Miss Owens; but I have been too idle to practice yet:—however, as I must marry some day, for such is man's fate, I must be getting clients, or I shall be so poor nobody will have me."

Clara's eyes looked, for one quick moment, into his own, saying that there was one, perhaps, who would have him, poor or rich; at least malicious Miss Townsend, one of the ladies present, and who would have given both her own eyes to get him, said so all over town the next day.

"Are you going to the opera, to-night, Mrs. Manderson?" interrupted one of the guests. "Mrs. Wood is positively divine in Norma."

"No, I am sorry to say. Charles went down, this morning, to secure seats, but there were no good ones to be had. He forgot it yesterday."

"How glad I am," cried Mrs. Rawlson, "for I have two seats at my disposal. I sent James, yesterday, and took four, intending to ask my cousins, the Misses Jensbury. But they went out of town this morning. So, as you are so fond of music, you must really be my guest there to-night."

Mrs. Manderson accepted the offer without hesitation. Clara's heart was in a flutter again, but this time with delight; for the son, she reflected, would accompany them of course. She did not see that it was a manoeuvre of her aunt; but Mrs. Manderson did: yet as the latter was really anxious that the young people should make a match, she was not sorry; and accordingly resolved to meet Mrs. Rawlson half way.

"We'll make a partnership, my dear," she said, laughingly, laying her hand on Mrs. Rawlson's arm "you shall furnish the seats, and I the carriage. Its not worth while for you to have your coach out also: Charles and I will call for you; and it will be quite like a family party."

When Manderson, on alighting for Mrs. Rawlson and her niece, saw the latter enter the parlor arrayed for the evening, he could scarcely restrain an exclamation at her beauty. Clara wore a dress of rich scarlet India crape, which brought out her exquisite complexion in brilliant relief. The Grecian corsage, confined at the waist by a belt with a jeweled buckle, was well calculated to display to the utmost advantage her slight, elegant figure. Her arms were bare, with the exception of the black velvet bands around her wrists, fastened with clasps set with rubies; and a narrow black velvet ribbon, to which was attached a heart also set with rubies, made her white neck look perfectly dazzling from the contrast. Her hair was arranged in small puffs

on the forehead and temples, as was then the fashion; and the heavy bows were confined behind with jeweled arrows. There was a soft lustre in her eye, as she welcomed Manderson, that made her look, at least in his opinion, transcendantly lovely. She carried, on one arm, a white Thibet Opera cloak, lined and trimmed with cygnet down, which her guest immediately stepped forward to throw over her shoulders; she blushing all over them, as he did so, and he, for one instant, tempted to kiss them, in defiance of etiquette, so round, and polished, and shapely, and like roseate snow they looked.

Many an opera glass was leveled at Clara, as she and her escort entered their box. The two elder ladies were soon deep in the discussion of the merits and dresses of their acquaintance; but Clara, with smiling eyes and willing ear, listened to Charles Manderson, almost unconscious that any one else was in the house.

"You have seen Mrs. Wood in Norma often, I suppose," said her companion. "How do you like her?"

"She almost makes me believe in a character as unnatural as Norma."

"You don't think the character unnatural?"

"Almost revolting," replied Clara. "But yet she redeems herself, by dying for her lover in the end."

Manderson regarded the sarcastic speaker, for a moment, in silent admiration. Then he resumed,

"Do you consider it unnatural for a proud woman, so frightfully wronged, her passionate love so foully insulted, to revenge herself in a moment of frenzy?"

Clara's eyes fell before his earnest gaze: and she answered, in a low voice, hesitatingly,

"I believe that a woman who once loves, loves always. No neglect, no contumely changes her affection."

"As Shakespeare says, in that noble sonnet, 'that is not love which alters, when it alteration finds.' Ah! Miss Owens," continued Manderson, insensibly dropping his voice to a whisper, "how few of your sex think like you do."

She raised her deep blue eyes to him, and said, "You believe so?"

The conversation might have grown dangerous to both parties, if it had continued. But, at this critical point, the overture began, and talking was out of the question. There was a rustle through the house, as everybody composed themselves to listen. Directly the little bell tinkled its warning, the curtain rose, and the white-robed, oak-crowned Druid priests slowly marched upon the stage.

Through the fluctuations of that most unequalled lyric drama, Manderson watched, with deep interest, the expression of Clara's face. He was really fascinated by her, and to a degree he was amazed at; and he wished to see if she possessed qualities that would warrant his yielding to love. Little did Clara imagine what an ordeal she was undergoing. Yet she stood the scrutiny wonderfully well; for she had, as Manderson had told his mother, a heart which even a frivolous education had not wholly destroyed; and all those portions of the opera, which appealed to this, brought the indignant color to her cheek, and sometimes the tears to her eyes.

The conclusion of her companion was so far favorable, at least, that, when he put on her opera cloak on leaving, he did it with a care that their short acquaintance scarcely made necessary.

As for Clara she was supremely happy, happier than she had ever been in her life. On reaching home, she ascended to her chamber almost immediately, and soon dismissing her sleepy maid, threw herself into a fauteuil before her fire. Here she sat dreamily, in one of those reveries that come but once or twice in a life-time, until she was aroused by the watchman crying musically under her window, "twelve o'clock, and a starlight morning."

VI.—THE SLEIGH RIDE.

The solar lamp was lighted on the centre-table of Mrs. Rawlson's parlors, a piece of embroidery and a pair of zephyr worsteds lying beside it. The good lady herself was seated in a large arm-chair, before the warm fire, eagerly perusing one of Bulwer's new novels: and Clara, who occupied a position on the other side of the table, was abstractedly snipping up, scissors in hand, strand after strand of zephyr.

At last the young girl gave a most perceptible yawn. Her aunt looked up in astonishment, for the *ennuye*, which she would at another time have found so insupportable, was now completely banished by the book before her.

"What's the matter, Clara?" she said. "Tired to death doing nothing, I suppose. Well, wait a little while, then I will have finished this volume, and you can begin it. You will be fascinated with it, I'm sure." And Mrs. Rawlson sank down in her chair again, and in a moment was as deep in her story as ever.

Clara picked up her embroidery, took about a dozen stitches in it, tossed it down again, and leaning her head on her hand, began beating a tattoo with her scissors on the top of the table. Mrs. Rawlson's attention was again withdrawn from her novel. If she had not been so com-

fortable herself, she would have pitied her niece more: as it was, she pitied her as much as she possibly could; and good-naturedly said,

"Dear me, do hear the sleigh-bells. I wonder if it is clear. James said it had stopped snowing, when he came in with the coal."

Clara, somewhat roused, listened a moment.

"How merrily the bells *do* ring," she said.

"I wonder who'll be the first to invite you to a ride," resumed her aunt. But it was too great a stretch of good nature to say more; for she was in the middle of a chapter: and drawing her footstool nearer to her, and leaning her head on her still fair and dimpled hand, she was soon oblivious again to Clara.

Meantime Cora, the little spaniel, was curled up in her wadded basket, where, covered with a satin quilt, she lay fast asleep, so Clara had not even her dog to amuse her. But there stood her piano, which she had not opened for days. Happy thought! She would try some of the Norma music, which was the rage just then. So, after playing the grand march, she took up *Costa Diva*. Her voice was a sweet *soprano*, not of much strength, but she sang with a good deal of feeling.

In the midst of this the bell rang, and on the outer door opening, she heard a gentleman's voice in the hall.

"Eureka, Clara," exclaimed Mrs. Rawlson, whom this had suddenly aroused, "that is Mr. Manderson's voice, dear." The moment after Manderson himself entered the parlor.

He came in bowing, with his usual grace. "It is really a shame to disturb you," he said, "you look so cozy and home-like. You have no idea what a luxury a home is to one, like me, who has been knocked about, for two or three years, in villainous hotels, lodgings, and everything except a home."

Mrs. Rawlson gave a quick, meaning glance at Clara; but the latter was smiling a welcome up into her visitor's face.

All her listlessness now vanished from the young girl. Her face, lately so expressionless, became animated; and she entered with zest into the conversation which followed. For a while foreign and domestic households were discussed; and from this they passed to the difference between European and American manners. At last, at a pause, Mr. Manderson said, smiling on Clara,

"Do you know, Miss Owens, that I had nearly forgotten my business here? If I am so fortunate as to find you disengaged, will you let me take you out in my sleigh to-morrow?"

Clara's heart leaped quick, with gratified pride,

and perhaps with other feelings also. But she answered, with well-bred calmness,

"I should be very happy to go."

"You are not afraid to trust her, are you, Mrs. Rawlson?" said Manderson, turning to the aunt. "My sleigh looks like a mere cockle-shell; but it is strong, I assure you; and I am accustomed to the horse."

Mrs. Rawlson replied in the negative. Telling Clara to wrap up warmly, and that he would call at eleven o'clock, Manderson now rose and took his leave, having to go, as he said, for his mother, who was spending the evening sociably with a friend.

"He is an excellent son," said Mrs. Rawlson, as the street door closed after him, "there are few such now-a-days. I congratulate you, my child." And with these words, which implied that she considered Clara's conquest secure, she resumed her novel.

The next morning Clara looked out, the first thing, to see if it was clear. The frosty, unclouded sky was blue as steel: and the sun shone dazzlingly on house-top and pavement. Sleighs were already dashing by; boys were snow-balling each other; everything without looked exhilarating.

The breakfast was hurried through with unusual alacrity. Clara, punctual for once, had just finished her toilet, when the clock struck eleven. Just then a merry jingling of bells, that ceased all at once in front of the house, announced the arrival of Manderson. Peeping between the lace curtains of her chamber window, she saw a beautiful little nautilus-shaped sleigh, to which was attached a splendid chesnut horse that shook his head, and tinkled his bells, and flecked himself with foam from his mouth in his impatience to be off. Manderson threw the reins to the servant who was beside him, leaped out, and ascended Mrs. Rawlson's steps two at a time.

Clara came down stairs, blushing and smiling, her maid carrying after her a pair of furred carriage shoes, into which her little feet were soon thrust. Then, standing prettily before the pier-glass, she tied a thread-lace veil over her black velvet bonnet, chatting laughingly to Manderson and her aunt, for she was in the highest spirits.

When they reached the street, Manderson took the reins from the servant, whom he dismissed, and handing Clara in, bowed to Mrs. Rawlson, who stood at the window watching them. Clara kissed her hand playfully to her aunt at the same time; and, with a word from her companion, the impatient thorough-bred was off.

Chesnut street was like a carnival, so to speak,

on that bright morning. A hundred sleighs were dashing by, in opposite directions, and with the speed and crowd, it was a miracle, each moment, that no one was killed. But the gay equipages avoided each other as if by magic. Here a magnificent turn-out, with a pair of high-stepping animals, swept on, the horses covered with bells, and the vehicle buried in costly furs, from which half a dozen rosy faces peeped laughingly forth. There a tiny thing, as light and graceful as a snow-wreath, skimmed along, behind a single fast trotter, no one in it but the dashing young blood who drove. Here a load of children went by, in a staid family sleigh, driven by the old black coachman, exuberant happiness in their every look. There, like a swallow on the wing, another shot past, its only occupants being two lovers, the owner and the beautiful girl beside him. Feathers were streaming; veils flying; and curls blowing wildly about. Nods were rapidly exchanged as acquaintances passed. The whole air was full of girlish laughter, heard over even the merry frolic of the bells. The quick, loud cries of the drivers to their horses, intermixed with the hurrahs of the truant school-boys, who stood at the corners snow-balling the sleighs; the sharp sound of the runners on the icy surface; and the dazzling whiteness of street and side-walk: these completed the exhilaration of the scene. Occasionally some young Jehu, reckless how closely he shaved in passing, would extort a scream from a party of ladies, or nearly tilt himself over against a drift: but, the next instant, the mad-cap would be half a square off, and lost to sight among the flashing equipages.

Swifter than the swiftest, Manderson flew along, darting in and out among the throng, hearing continually from the ladies exclamations of delight at his beautiful little equipage; and from the gentlemen hearty admiration at his skill as charioteer. It was the proudest hour of Clara's life. She knew not only that every eye was on her, but that a hundred of her fair friends were dying of envy almost: and this, in addition to the intoxication of the scene itself, was enough to turn even a stronger head than her's. Occasionally Manderson ventured to take his eye off his horse, and glance at her. The frosty air had given her a vivid color; her eyes danced with happiness; she was, in truth, more charming, that morning, than ever before. For the time he fancied himself really in love.

At last they reached a part of the street where, for a square and more, there happened, just then, to be but few sleighs. Here Manderson, for the first time, gave his horse the head; and now the tremendous stride of the animal was apparent.

They had gone but a short distance, however, when they heard behind them the sound of swift runners, accompanied by a quick, eager voice urging on a horse. Manderson thought he knew the tones, and glancing over his shoulder recognized Elwood. The latter, enraged at seeing Clara with his rival, determined to mortify her by passing them, a feat which he did not think difficult, as he boasted of having the swiftest horse in town. Manderson, indignant at this insolence, for a moment allowed himself to yield to his feelings. Instead of checking his horse, he gave a low whistle, which the gallant chesnut seemed perfectly to comprehend, for the animal threw himself forward on the instant, in a more vigorous stride than ever. Elwood shouted to his bay in turn, and, for half a minute, the two animals rushed side by side at the very top of their speed. Everybody turned to look as the sleighs whizzed by, the snow flying in thin powder from under the runners. Suddenly, however, a shriek burst simultaneously from all the spectators, for half way over the street, at the next crossing, and right in front of the excited young men, appeared an old man, evidently quite feeble, and certain to be run down unless one or both held up.

The old man was more immediately before the other sleigh, but Manderson, the instant he saw him, shouted to his horse, at the same moment violently checking him. The chesnut stopped at once, as if he had been a machine, standing, like a statue carved in stone, except for his violent breathing.

But Elwood made no attempt to save the pedestrian. He had found it difficult to keep up with Manderson, and this, when he had expected to pass him with ease, excited him to rage. He was in no mood to allow himself to be balked, by the possibility that he might run down an old man, whom he saw to be poor, and consequently despised, and who had no business, he thought, at any rate, to be in people's way. Accordingly he only shouted a warning to the pedestrian, and kept on regardless of consequences.

That happened which might have been foreseen. The old man, who had been walking abstractedly, looking on the ground, like one in profound thought, or unaccustomed to the perils of a city crossing, raised his head, as he heard the warning, and, seeing his imminent peril, seemed either too bewildered, or too feeble, to spring out of the way. Perhaps, even if he had been young, and entirely self-collected, escape would have been impossible: as it was, he had not moved a step, when the horse struck him

down, and the sleigh rasped over his prostrate body.

The author of this outrage was the only one who seemed to feel no pity or compunction. He never paused to see if his victim was hurt, but turning with a triumphant look to Manderson, as he shot ahead of the latter, uttered another sharp cry to his horse, and swept on. A mingled groan of indignation and horror burst from the crowd at this sight; and a dozen men sprang immediately into the street, to pick up the apparently senseless stranger. But Manderson, who had leaped from his sleigh almost the instant it stopped, throwing the reins to a new's boy he saw running forward, was the first to reach the old man. With no slight remorse, for he felt himself partially to blame for the disaster, he stooped, and raising the sufferer in his arms, gently carried him to a drug-store, which happened to be on the corner. The crowd followed, pressing in, every one asking questions, but none offering to do anything. Manderson was the first to speak. Having laid the old man carefully down on a sofa, he looked up, and said,

"Who will go for a physician? Stay, here is my card," he added, as a lad offered to run on the errand, "get the first one you can, and tell him I sent you."

The victim still lay senseless, and the blood, covering his face from a wound in the head, he looked as if death was inevitable. As Manderson felt his pulse, the apothecary came forward to advise what his experience suggested.

"He is not so dangerously hurt as he looks, I hope, Mr. Manderson," said the latter, noticing the anxious look of the former, and recognizing him. "He has been a stout man in his day, and must have some constitution left yet; and that is everything in a case like this. Does any one know him? He is a farmer evidently, and, therefore, a stranger: but he must have relatives, or friends somewhere in town."

"This is his hat," said one of the crowd, "I picked it up; and this letter, which lay near, and seemed to have fallen from it."

"The direction is to Mr. James Forester," said the apothecary, as he took the epistle, "and it is evidently just from the post-office: so this must be the gentleman's name; but that, I fear, is all we are likely to know, unless he recovers his senses. Ah! here comes the doctor," he said, as he recognized a popular physician, one of his best patrons, "make way there, make way for him."

In a little while all immediate fears for the old man's life were relieved, for, on being bled, Mr. Forester languidly opened his eyes. Manderson

drew a sigh of relief, and thought of Clara, for the first time since the accident. He gave a moment to rapid deliberation, and then, calling aside the apothecary, whispered hurriedly,

“I will return here as soon as I have taken the lady home I was sleighing with, and whom, in this excitement, I have quite forgotten: she

has been waiting in the street all the while. I must charge myself entirely with this affair. In half an hour, and before the gentleman can be moved, I will return to take him home.”

With these words, he bowed, and hastened to Clara.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

GRACE LESLIE; OR, WEALTH AGAINST WORTH.

BY ALICE MONTALON.

MUSIC, and the sound of happy voices, mingling with joyous laughter, proceeded from the well furnished and brilliantly lighted mansion of John Beaumont, Esq., in one of the broadest and most aristocratic squares of Boston. Let us draw aside those magnificent curtains, dear reader, and take a peep, unseen, at what is going on in the handsome parlor. See! here is a quiet little nook, in which we will ensconce ourselves, while you are introduced to some of the principal performers in the scene before you.

First, let me tell you to notice that showily dressed lady, the hostess, whose bright, restless eye is constantly roving over the company; for you have already guessed that there is a party assembled in Mrs. Beaumont's drawing-room. We must stop to observe her one moment. See, what quick, uneasy glances she casts around, to see if all is going on to her satisfaction; if George Beaumont, her son, a young man of twenty-five, entirely too warm-hearted, as his mother thinks, is paying any attention to that poor Miss Hill, whom she invited only for the purpose of exciting her envy by the display before her. Satisfied that George is ignorant of any such shocking improprieties, she glances keenly in the direction of her daughter, Henrietta, to observe whether Lieutenant Jones, who lives entirely upon his pay, is devoting himself to her. But she need have no fear for Henrietta; she is in disposition the exact counterpart of her mother, and though she may for amusement condescend to receive attentions from the poor officer, she will never sacrifice station and wealth to love.

But we are omitting to describe the owner of this noble mansion. In truth, he was such a cipher in his own house, that unless people saw him they forgot that he was in existence. He is that pale, white-haired man standing aloof from the crowd for which he has no taste. You can read in his countenance that easy good-nature is his predominant quality; in fact, he is as much distinguished for mildness and gentleness as his consort for the reverse. "Last though not least," is little Maggie, a child of thirteen summers, the pet of the whole house. Even her cold, calculating mother forgets her sternness when she

gazes on Maggie's open, happy face, and observes her kindness and love to all. Sweet Maggie, she is just the one to twine herself around her father's heart, who is alone in one sense, among all the members of that household. It is Maggie that always has his chair and slippers ready by the fire when he comes home from business weary and exhausted. It is Maggie's sweet voice and winning smile which heals all disputes: Maggie is, indeed, the good angel of the house.

But are we not forgetting the assembly before us? Hark! some one has gone to the piano, and Lieutenant Jones has taken advantage of the absence of Mrs. Beaumont, to whisper a few words to Henrietta; for the poor fellow really loves the haughty girl, to which she answers by a nod and an equivocal smile. A cotillion is forming, and an elaborately dressed exquisite, of no sense and much wealth, saunters up to Miss Beaumont, and in a soft voice inquires, "if she will *favour* him for the next *dance*." The lady replies by a gracious smile, and Jones is left to his fate.

In a little while Mr. Beaumont slips off from the scene so uncongenial to him, to the library, where he finds Maggie, who is too young, her mother says, to participate in the amusements down stairs. She greets him with an affectionate kiss, and "oh! papa, you have come at last, have you? I have been looking for you so long, and now and then taking a peep at the people in the drawing-room;" and then her eye sparkles as she thinks that it will be only a few years, when she too can go to parties and concerts as well as her eldest sister. After spending some time in reading and conversation they retire to rest, who shall not say happier, than those who consume the night in revelry.

In the meantime, Henrietta having found a more tempting bait in Mr. Augustus Moonshine, the exquisite before mentioned, or rather in his wealth, looks coldly on the lieutenant, while the dandy, thinking that there must be something very prepossessing in his appearance, that such a fine, showy girl as Miss Beaumont should admire him, twirls his moustache, and glances complacently at the fashionably arranged hair, and

in *his* estimation, admirably developed figure, reflected in the glass before him.

Mrs. Beaumont's company did not depart till a late hour, and notwithstanding all the efforts of the hostess to impress her guests with the idea of her wealth and importance, she had overheard a conversation between two ladies, which betrayed to her the real estimation in which they held her.

The next day things were restored to their proper order in Mrs. Beaumont's mansion.

About nine o'clock, a faint ring at the front door was heard, and the footman informed his mistress that a young woman desired to see her. Mrs. Beaumont inquired if she was a beggar, declaring that "she was bothered to death by demands for charity, and if she gave to all who asked she would be poor indeed."

"Oh, no, ma'am," replied the servant, "she does not look like a beggar, I guess she is one of them poor, genteel kind."

Mrs. Beaumont muttered that she dreaded this class far the most, for they would not be put off, and added, "here, James, tell her that I am engaged, and if she will go, here is a quarter for her." For Mrs. Beaumont, like too many of our fashionable ladies, would cheerfully lavish hundreds of dollars on a party, or head a subscription list with fifty dollars, if she thought that by so doing she could incur the world's approbation, or add to her *colat*; but her purse-strings were tightly closed on unostentatious poverty.

A slight smile curled James' lip, for though a servant, he had the feelings of a man, as he said, "he could not think of offering money to the young person, for he did not think she came to beg." His mistress, determining to deny all appeals to her purse, went slowly down stairs, where she found the young woman in question, who was standing in the entry, and had heard all the conversation. Mrs. Beaumont coldly motioned her to sit down in a small, richly furnished apartment leading from the parlor, where the poor girl sat vainly hoping for Mrs. Beaumont to begin the conversation. But finding that she was evidently expected to tell the occasion of her visit, after much blushing and hesitation, she said, "that she had been recommended to her as a seamstress by a lady who had left Boston."

She stated that she was the eldest daughter of Edward Leslie, formerly a merchant of New York, whose name was still well remembered in that city, and who had been reduced to actual poverty by the roguery of his partner. Leslie, who was too honorable to defraud his creditors of a single penny, had appropriated the whole of his private fortune to satisfy their demands. His

family, thus reduced from affluence to poverty, felt anxious to remove from a place in which they had moved in the highest circles, and accordingly came to Boston. Mr. Leslie, whose failure deeply affected him, soon fell into a rapid decline, and sank into the grave not long after their arrival at their new residence. His widow was thus left alone in the wide world to support her three fatherless children. But she trusted to "Him who has promised to be a husband to the widow, and a father to the fatherless;" nor did she trust in vain.

She had been supplied with sewing on liberal terms by Mrs. Hart, until that lady left Boston to reside in Philadelphia. This lady then recommended her to several of her friends, and advised the widow to engage her daughter as a seamstress to Mrs. Beaumont, with whom she was slightly acquainted, and who she knew was in want of such a person. Such was in substance the tale which Grace Leslie repeated to Mrs. Beaumont.

That lady heard her in silence, and then coldly observed that she was in no need of a sewer, but after a great deal of haggling about the price, consented to employ her at a reduced rate; which Grace, having no better prospect in view, agreed to accept, and promised to commence her duties the next day. After her departure, Mrs. Beaumont returned to her *boudoir*, well satisfied that she had secured a very competent seamstress, at a very moderate rate, and communicated her success to her eldest daughter, who observed that she hoped *this* sewing girl would know her place, and not insist on her privileges, as she sneeringly said Mary Martin had done, whom her mother had formerly employed. "And really, ma," said she, "I think you were to blame in her case, for if you had frowned upon her in the beginning, she would not have dared to have taken airs," and the young lady laughed scornfully at the idea of a *seamstress* placing herself on the level of young ladies of fashion.

The next morning Grace made her appearance, and was conducted to the sewing-room, a snug little place joining the dining-room, on the second floor. Here she was furnished with some fine sewing to test her abilities, and left to her own reflections.

Mrs. Beaumont, having learned that Grace was an expert embroiderer, soon supplied her with the finest and most expensive work, thus keeping the poor girl busy upon a sort of sewing which she had not agreed to do. Grace knowing that this was her only resource, and thinking that her employer would surely pay her more for the articles she was then completing, made no

complaint. But she soon found that this was a false expectation; for not only was she constantly supplied with embroidery, but Mrs. Beaumont soon gave her to understand that she was to be paid the same price for the finest, as well as the plainest sewing, although Grace had received none of the latter so far; and her employer hinted that many would be glad to obtain a permanent situation, and that she only took her from charity.

Charity! that much abused word. Does a merchant employ a needy clerk at a reduced salary, who, glad to get work at any price, performs the labor of two; he comforts his conscience by thinking that he has done a good work for charity's sake? Does a fashionable lady procure a poverty-stricken governess or seamstress for one-half what she usually pays, how complacently does she feel when she reflects that she has done so from pure motives of charity; without considering her own interests?

Thus Grace continued to toil on, uncheered by kind words, or even kind looks from Mrs. Beaumont, who thought that all help must be made to know their place, especially those who were necessarily brought into contact with the family, as seamstresses and governesses are, and receiving only contemptuous looks and tyrannical commands from Henrietta. Her lot would have been hard indeed had it not been for the sympathy of Maggie. Often had the kind-hearted little girl stolen up stairs to lighten the heavy hours of Grace by her affectionate manner and lively prattle; for Maggie had a faint perception that Grace was unhappy, but no more. She could not imagine the cause of the seamstress' sadness, for to Maggie, the darling of her family, everything in life was *couleur de rose*. Her kindness to Grace, made more conspicuous by the haughty contempt of Mrs. Beaumont and Henrietta, only served to make the poor girl's tears flow afresh. Poor Grace! how nimbly her fingers flew as the time drew near for her to return to the loved ones at home, by whom she was always received with love and sympathy.

"Who is that handsome, intellectual-looking girl whom I see passing in and out so often?" exclaimed George Beaumont, as the family sat at breakfast one morning. Henrietta answered by a scornful smile, and Mrs. Beaumont merely saying that she supposed it was the seamstress, became deeply interested in pouring out a cup of tea for George. But the young man was not so easily put off, and at the earliest opportunity obtained from Maggie full particulars respecting Grace, of whose existence he had until now been ignorant; and we may be sure that Miss Leslie

lost none of her attractions by having them repeated by Maggie.

Mrs. Beaumont now kept Grace closer than ever, sending her meals up to her, and contriving that she should be seen as little as possible by George; for she knew that her beauty was calculated to make an impression on the susceptible heart of her son. She feared too that he would be imposed upon by an artful, low girl, and thus be drawn into a mis-alliance, which of all things she dreaded.

Her interest would not allow her to dismiss Grace, for she knew she would never obtain another who knew so little of her rights and performed her duty so well. So she quieted her fears by never allowing George to see her; and so well did she manoeuvre that in a few days the young gentleman relapsed into his former ignorance.

Grace had now been employed at Mrs. Beaumont's four weeks, and one day as she was going home ventured to ask if it would be convenient to her employer to pay her, adding that she would not ask for it if she did not really need it, that her mother had caught a severe cold while sitting in a draught and was now confined to her bed, and that the support of the family depended in a great measure on her own exertions.

Mrs. Beaumont replied that she made it a rule never to pay her seamstress except every three months, for she had found that when she paid them weekly they were continually expecting it, and if payment was delayed for any time they were presumptuous. Not thinking that the poor have constant demands on their little store, and need it as soon, nay, sometimes sooner than they earn it.

Poor Grace felt as if she would choke, but forcing back the tears, entreated to be paid if it was only a small part. Mrs. Beaumont haughtily answered that she could not break her rule, muttering as she returned to the parlor that "that girl was really becoming too impudent, and it would serve her right to make her wait longer than the three months."

Grace stood a moment irresolute, and then folding her thin shawl closely around her, slowly left the house. After threading her way along many narrow and obscure streets she arrived at home, where she found her mother and the children in a small, but neat and thrifty-looking room; the former sitting up in bed endeavoring to finish the bosom of a fine shirt by the feeble light of a flickering candle. Grace took off her bonnet, and throwing herself on her mother's neck, burst into tears.

Mrs. Leslie, thinking something unusual had

occurred, tenderly inquired the cause of her distress. "Oh! mother," sobbed the poor girl, for her heart was overflowing with the pent-up grief of weeks, "dear mother, do not ask me to go to that woman's house again. You cannot think what I have suffered for four weeks. Mrs. Beaumont keeps me constantly at work, and if she thinks that I have stopped a moment to rest, she throws out hints that she always deducts for waste time; and then her eldest daughter taunts me with the difference in our station. And to-night I ventured to ask Mrs. Beaumont for a part, only a small part of the money due to me, and she seemed quite offended that I should dare to ask for it before she was ready to give it to me.

"But oh! mother," said she, smiling, for she already felt relieved by her tears, and the sympathy expressed in her mother's mild eye, "I wish you could know Maggie, the youngest of Mrs. Beaumont's children. She is a perfect little angel. Many were the cheering words and kindly smiles that I received from her when my very heart seemed breaking in that great house. She is just the one to banish grief, for she is so happy and light-hearted herself, that she appears to possess the power of making all around her so."

Mrs. Leslie gently soothed her daughter, telling her that she knew it was very annoying. "But you know, my love," she said, "that we cannot look for friends everywhere in this world, for it is only by trials and afflictions that we are purified and rendered able to endure what our Father sees fit to impose upon his children; 'for whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth.'

"So my child do not be troubled, but perform well your duty independent of the sneers of the world." Grace now insisted on her mother lying down, while she sat up to finish the sewing; and drawing the children around her, she began telling them a story to prevent their noise disturbing their mother. They listened eagerly, Annie, the youngest, a little one of four years, every now and then inquiring in a whisper of Sister Hetty, whether the orphans Gracie was telling them about, whose mamma and papa had "done to Dod," were real orphans.

Soon, however, their curiosity was overcome by sleep, and laying them gently by the side of their mother, Grace sat up to complete her work, and then after offering up a prayer to "Him who never sleeps," that He would guide her in the way she ought to go, and keep her from murmuring at her lot, she retired to rest with a heart lightened in a great measure of its woes.

The next day, Grace repaired to Mrs. Beaumont's, with a cheerful face and an elastic step,

and keeping in mind that it was for her mother and the little ones she toiled, her work was far from distasteful to her.

Nearly three weeks had elapsed since Grace's conversation with her mother, and still she had received no part of her money, when she informed Mrs. Beaumont that she really must have a portion at least of her wages, and she so far conquered her aversion to display her wants to the eye of a stranger, as to tell her that her mother was unable any longer to pay for the room they had occupied, and they had been obliged to remove to a smaller and less comfortable one; that they were actually in want of the necessaries of life. Poor Grace! she never could have told this much had not the thought of her mother and sisters suffering demanded the sacrifice.

Mrs. Beaumont, probably touched by the girl's wild manner, appeared ready to grant her demand, but thinking that she would not be conquered by the importunity of the girl, coldly declared that she could not overstep the limit of her rule; that if she did it in one case she must continue it in another, and therefore she could not consent to it.

The next morning eight o'clock came, but no Grace, nine o'clock, but still she did not appear, and as the day wore on Maggie's face grew very sad, and she thought the poor girl was certainly ill, or wondered if her mother was worse, for Grace had communicated to the sympathizing child the tale of her mother's illness and their reduced condition. While Mrs. Beaumont scarcely gave her a thought, or if she remembered her at all, it was to suppose that she was staying away to bring her into her measure; and she added to her eldest daughter, that she was not now anxious for her to come, as all her fine sewing was nearly finished, thanks to Grace's active fingers; that she had no doubt she would come in due time for her money.

The next day came, but it did not bring Grace with it, and after dinner Maggie stole softly into the library, where her father was sitting, saying, "papa, I have a secret, a great secret to tell you; promise me that you will grant what I am going to ask." Her father laying his hand upon her sunny curls, gravely replied, that he hoped his little daughter was not going to meddle with secrets which would bring her into trouble. "Oh! no, papa, it is about poor——" and here she suddenly stopped. "But promise, papa, that you will not say no." Mr. Beaumont said he would willingly give his consent to any reasonable demand, and now inquired the cause of her eager manner.

Maggie then told him of Grace, that she had not come for two days, and she knew she must be sick; and "papa," said the little girl, drawing closer to him, "Grace says they are in *want*, in *want*, papa;" for although she did not know by experience the meaning of the word, she was aware it was some dreadful thing which the poor suffered. She then asked permission to take James, the footman, with her, and see what kept Grace away, for she had told her where she lived.

"And remember, papa, this is to be kept secret from mamma, or she will not let me go." Her father said that he himself would accompany her, and bid her request Mrs. Dale, the housekeeper, to fill a basket with provisions for the children, and cordials for their mother.

As soon as it was dark, Mr. Beaumont and Maggie, followed by James, carrying the basket, issued from the house, and after walking some time, and passing through the most thickly populated part of the city, they entered a narrow, dirty street, and stopped before an old, miserable-looking house, which Mr. Beaumont said must be the one they were seeking. The crazy shutters were swayed to and fro by the wind, and the creaking stairs seemed hardly able to bear their weight. On the first floor, they inquired for Mrs. Leslie, and were directed to the highest room in the house. On reaching the door, Mr. Beaumont knocked, but after waiting some time, and receiving no answer, he gently pushed the door open and entered the room. The father and daughter stood on the threshold of the apartment, silently gazing on the scene of wretchedness before them.

In one corner of the room, on a bed on the floor, lay Mrs. Leslie, while the younger children were gathered around the fire-place (for stove there was none) in which were a few embers, and were trying to warm their little red hands and feet. The only articles in the room were the bed, a small rocking-chair, the remnant of their former furniture, a table of the coarsest material, and a small, rickety stand, on which was placed a bottle of medicine, purchased with the last earnings of Mrs. Leslie.

The widow was asleep, and the children, too much engaged in trying to extract a little warmth from the coals, did not notice the entrance of the strangers. "Hetty," said little Annie, "what mates sister Gracie try so much, won't that lady div her her money?" Just then Grace entered the room, for she had been taking home some

sewing, and on discovering who the visitors were, warmly thanked them for their kindness in thus coming to see her.

Mr. Beaumont, who had been a silent spectator of the scene, felt the tears fast filling his eyes, and ashamed of being seen weeping, took Annie upon his lap, and began caressing her. Maggie seemed then indeed like an angel; with a gentle hand she poured out some wine for Mrs. Leslie, while James was making a fire; and putting a piece of cake into the hands of the delighted children, she told Grace to draw out the table, and place the provisions from the basket on it. In a short time an air of comparative comfort was diffused throughout the cheerless apartment. Annie first looking at the blazing fire and then at the well spread table, exclaimed, "that it would be a dood while before they were hundry and cold again."

Mr. Beaumont, after leaving money enough to last until he saw them again, departed with Maggie, feeling that he had learned a lesson from his little daughter which he would not easily forget; while Mrs. Leslie silently breathed a prayer to God that He had thus raised up friends to her in the hour of her extremity.

The next day Mr. Beaumont removed the family to better lodgings, and in a short time procured for Mrs. Leslie, who soon recovered her health by care and good nursing, the office of governess to the children of a wealthy and worthy friend who had lost his wife; a situation which Mrs. Leslie, by her talents and education, was well qualified to fill.

In this genial atmosphere little Annie grew in spirit, and her mother fondly thought, in form, like their darling Maggie, who now and then paid them an unexpected visit, and was greeted with a heart's true welcome.

Mr. Linton, for that was the widower's name, soon found in Grace those virtues he had lost with his wife, and after the Leslie's had been domiciled in his mansion about two years, led Grace Leslie to the altar a happy bride. Mrs. Beaumont often wonders what became of the poor seamstress, and whenever that is the case, a smile of intelligence passes between Mr. Beaumont and Maggie; but they keep their own secret. When Mrs. Beaumont and her elder daughter discover that the wealthy and benevolent Mrs. Linton was the poor dependant on their caprice, we may imagine the mortification of Henrietta to find that a seamstress can indeed rise to the level of young ladies of fashion.

THE BLACK RAVEN.

A HUNGARIAN TRADITION

BY M. J. SMITH.

AMONG the lofty Carpathians, where they mirror their stern and solemn beauty in the clear waters of the Waag, linked together in a long chain, like the giant guardians of the fair valley at their feet, may be seen a detached and sterile rock, almost inaccessible, totally devoid of vegetation, and laved by the rapid river, which hurries from beneath its heavy shadows to dance again in brightness in the sunlight beyond.

The Count Stibor was as brave as he was high-born, and riches had poured in upon him until he had become one of the wealthiest nobles in the empire. It chanced that one day he hunted with a great retinue among the mountain fastnesses; and glorious was the sport of that gallant hunt. The light-footed chamois, the antlered deer, the fierce wolf, and the grisly bear were alike laid low; when, as the sun was about to set, he formed his temporary encampment on the pleasant bank of the Waag, just where, on the opposite side of the channel, the lone and precipitous rock we have described turned aside the glancing waters.

The heart of Stibor was merry, for the sport had gone well throughout the day, and when his rude tents were raised, the savory steam of the venison, and the sparkles of the wine-cup brightened his humor, and he listened, with a smile upon his lip to the light sallies of the joyous company.

As they talked idly of the day's hunting, however, one wished that the deer had taken another direction; a second that he had not missed a certain shot; a third that he had not lost his couteau-de-chasse in the underwood: in short, there was not an individual among them who had not some regret blent with his triumph, like a drop of gall in a cup of honey.

"Hear me," said the magnificent noble, during a transient pause in the conversation; "I seem to be the only hunter of the day to whom the sport has been without a blemish. It is true that all your misfortunes are light enough: but I will have no shadow cast upon my own joy; and therefore to compensate to you for these alleged mishaps, each of you is free to form a wish, and if it be within my power to grant it,

I pledge my knightly word that it shall be fulfilled."

A murmur of admiration ran through the astonished circle; and the work of ambition soon began. Gold was the first thing asked for—for avarice is ever the most greedy of all passions; and then revenge upon an enemy—for human nature will often sacrifice personal gain to vengeance; and then power—authority—rule over their fellow-men; the darling occupation and privilege of poor, weak, self-misjudging mortals. In short, there was no boon within the reach of reason which had not been asked and promised, when the eye of Stibor fell upon his jester, who was standing apart playing with the tassels of his vest, and apparently quite uninterested in a subject which had made all around him eager and excited.

"And thou, knave," said the noble, "hast thou nothing to ask? Thou must bestir thyself, or thy master will have little left to give, if the game go on thus."

"Fear not, fear not," replied the fool; "the claimants have been courteous, for they have not touched upon that portion of thy possessions which I covet. They have demanded gold, blood, dominion; the power to enjoy themselves, and to render others wretched—they are welcome to all they want. I ask only for stones." A loud laugh ran through the circle. "Stones, Betzko!" echoed the astonished Stibor: "thou shalt have them to thy heart's content, where and in what shape thou wilt."

"I take thee at thy word, Count Stibor. I will have them yonder, on the crest of the bold rock that stands out like a braggart daring the foot of man; and in the shape of a good castle in which I may hold my own, should need be," was the unlooked-for reply.

"Thou hast lost thy chance, Betzko;" cried a voice amid the universal merriment that ensued. "Not even Stibor can accomplish thy desire."

"Who dares to say that Stibor cannot grant it, if such be his will?" demanded the chieftain in a voice of thunder, as he rose proudly from the earth where he had been seated on a couch of skins. "The castle of Betzko shall be built!"

And it *was* built—and within a year a festival was held there: and the noble became enamored of his own creation—for it was beautiful in its strength, and the fair dames admired its courtly halls as much as the warriors prized its solid walls and its commanding towers. And thus Count Stibor bought off the rock-fortress from his jester with gold, and made it the chief place of his abode; and he feasted there with his guests, and made merry with music and dances, until it seemed as though life was to be for him one long festival. Men often walk over the spot which afterward opens to bury them.

Little by little the habit of self-indulgence grew upon the luxurious noble; yet still he loved the chase beyond all else on earth, and his dogs were of the fleetest and finest breed.

He was one day at table, surrounded by the richest viands and the rarest wines, when one of his favorite hounds entered the hall howling with pain, and dragging after him his wounded foot, which dropped blood as he moved along. Terror seized upon the hearts of the vassals, even before the rage of their lord burst forth; and when it came, terrible was the storm as he vowed vengeance against the wretch who had dared thus to mutilate an animal that he valued.

An aged slave flung himself at his feet. "Mercy! my lord, mercy!" he exclaimed, piteously. "I have served you faithfully for years—my beard is grey with time, and my life has been one of hardship. Have mercy on me, for he flew upon me, and would have torn me, had I not defended myself against his fury. I might have destroyed him, but I sought only to preserve myself. Have mercy upon my weakness!"

The angry chieftain, however, heeded not the anguish of his grey hairs; and pointing to a low balcony, which extended across the window of the apartment and hung over the precipice, he commanded that the wretched old man should be flung from thence into the river which flowed beneath as an example to those caitiffs who valued their own worthless lives above those of his noble hounds.

As the miserable tools of an imperious will were dragging the unhappy victim to his fate, he raised his voice, and cursed the tyrant whom they served; and having done so, he summoned him to appear at the tribunal, which none can escape, to answer for this his last crime, on its first anniversary. But the powerful chief heeded not his words.

"Away with him!" he said, sternly, as he lifted his goblet to his lips—and there was a struggle, a shriek of agony, and then a splash upon the river wave, and all was silent!

A year went by in festival and pride; and the day on which that monstrous crime had been committed returned unheeded. There was a feast in the castle, and Stibor, who month after month gave himself up yet more to self-indulgence, gradually became heavy with wine, and his attendants carried him to a couch beside the same window whence the unfortunate slave had been hurled twelve months before.

The guests drank on for a time, and made merry at the insensibility and helplessness of their powerful host; and then they departed, each to his business or his pleasure, and left him there alone.

The casement had been flung back to admit the air freely into the heated apartment; and the last reveller had scarcely departed, when a raven—the sombre messenger of Nemesis—flew thrice round the battlements of the castle, and then alighted on the balcony. Several of the guests amused their idleness by watching the evolutions of the ill-omened bird; but once having lost sight of it, they turned away and thought of it no more.

Meanwhile, a work of agony and death had been delegated to that dark-winged messenger. It rested but an instant from its flight ere once more it hovered over the couch of the sleeping Stibor; and then darting down, its sharp beak penetrated at one thrust from his eye into his brain!

The agony awoke him, but he awoke only to madness from its extent. He reeled to and fro, venting imprecations to which none were by to listen, and writhed until his tortured body was one convulsion. At length, by a mighty effort, striving to accomplish he knew not what, he hurled himself over the balcony, at the self-same spot whence the slave had been flung by his own command; and as he fell, the clear waters of the Waag for a time resisted the impure burthen, and threw him back shrieking and howling from their depths.

But he sank at last; and when his parasites sought him on the morrow, they found only the couch on which he had lain, and a few drops of blood to hint that he had died a death of violence and vengeance.

They searched for him carefully on all sides; and then, when they were quite assured that he had passed away never to return, whispers grew of the grey-headed slave, and the mysterious raven—until by degrees the fate of the famous Stibor was fashioned into form, and grew into a legend throughout the country; scaring the village maiden in her twilight walk, and the lone shepherd in his watch upon the hills.

THE AVALANCHE.

BY CHARLES J. PETERSON.

"HARK! what is that?"

The speaker, who was a woman about the middle age of life, at work in the common apartment of a Swiss dwelling, suddenly paused at her occupation, and with a pale face and quivering lips, gazed around on her children, who, at these signs of alarm, gathered in terror to her side.

"Hark!" she said, again, as one of the little ones began to cry. "Be still, on your life, till I listen." And she held up her finger.

There was a dead silence at these words; a dead silence, we mean, within the room; for without was heard a hollow, ominous sound of awful significance.

"It is an avalanche," cried the eldest of the children, a lad of about fifteen summers, breaking the stillness, "quick, mother, fly."

The mother instinctively snatched the hand of her youngest child, and turned toward the door, the whole family following her.

"Oh! if your father was but here," she said, as with hurried steps she crossed the room. "What shall we do? If the avalanche is near, we shall be overwhelmed, or, if we even escape at first, we shall be lost on the mountain, for I know none of the paths."

In truth the tender mother was overpowered, for the moment, by the responsibilities of her situation. But, at this juncture, her son came to her relief.

"Never fear, mother," he said, like a young hero. "If we only escape being buried, I'll find a path, for I've not been out with father for nothing."

As he spoke he flung open the door, and courageously stepped forth the first. His glance was immediately directed to the right, where the Alpine Summit rose usually distinctly defined, high into the heavens. But now the outlines of the mountain were lost in a white, shadowy mist,

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that rushing rapidly downward, seemed as if it would, the next moment, envelope the dwelling in its fatal embraces. Too well he knew what that awful cloud portended. It was the avalanche.

"Run, run for your lives," he cried, and pushing his mother and her children out, as he spoke, he leaped after like a young chamois.

The terrified family needed no incentives, however, to flight. Even the youngest comprehended the imminency of the peril, and all breathlessly rushed down the slope.

Suddenly the lad heard the bleating of sheep. He had forgotten, until thus reminded, that the flock, their almost sole support, was penned up, and would be overwhelmed if left to themselves. But if he delayed to release them, his own life might pay the forfeit. Every second was precious. He hesitated still, when there came another bleat. The piteous cry went to his heart. Every one of that flock had eaten often from his hand, and most of them he had carried in his arms when they were lambs. Without a word he turned back, and rushed up the slight ascent that led to their shelter. The sheep, crowding together at the door, looked up at him so gratefully that he felt repaid fully for the peril he ran. As he threw open the way for them, they rushed out, and fled down the slope.

Hitherto his mother had not looked back. But, at this moment, turning her eyes around to see if her children were all safe, she recognized her son standing at the door of the pen, and the foremost sheep just leaping through. She stopped, on the instant, with a cry of despair.

"We are lost, we are lost," she cried, "oh! my son, how could you peril everything?"

But the lad, even as she spake, came bounding down the hill.

"On, on! Not a moment is to spare. I can

still outrun you all. To the left, or you are lost."

It was an awful moment. Poised on high, like some enormous mountain gathering impetus as it descended, the avalanche hung overhead. Then, with the rush of a whirlwind, down it came, carrying stones and even rocks with it.

For an instant the fugitives disappeared from sight. Nothing, indeed, was seen but a thick, impervious mist, as it were of flakes of snow infinitely fine. Gradually this floated past, like a fog driving down a mountain side, and then the voice of the lad rose in a clear, loud hallo.

It was answered, out of the mist ahead, by the voice of his mother; and immediately afterward she, with her little ones, became visible. The avalanche was still heard thundering downward, but below them; and they saw, at a glance, that the danger was past.

They had been saved, indeed, almost by a miracle. The lofty and nearly perpendicular

cliffs, by which their dwelling was surrounded, here afforded, for about a hundred yards, a sheltered corner, caused by the overhanging brow of a precipice. The avalanche in its descent, had passed on both sides of this ledge, carrying everything before it that it met on its way. Had the fugitives been a minute later, or a minute earlier, they would have been in its path. The generous act of the lad, in pausing to relieve the helpless flock, had in reality saved the lives of all.

He saw it, his mother saw it, and they looked at each other. The same sentiment moved the heart of each, though it found words only at the mother's lips.

"It is the hand of God, my children," she said, solemnly, falling on her knees. "To Him be all the praise!"

An hour after, the fugitives were safe in a neighbor's cottage, having found an old path which had escaped the track of the avalanche.

"MYSTERIOUS KNOCKINGS."

BY ELLA RODMAN.

THE great, mahogany clock, that stood in the corner, as erect as a sentinel on duty, had just struck three, and the drowsy stillness of a summer afternoon seemed to pervade the whole house. It was a capacious, old-fashioned edifice, shaded by lofty trees, that seemed, like every thing else connected with Mrs. Feld, trained up in the way they should go.

The old lady, herself, had gone to her apartment for an after-dinner nap; and sleeping seemed to be the order of the day, for in the dining-room, Mrs. Pancrust, the housekeeper, though not "enjoying the comforts of a quiet nap"—for her naps never were *quiet* ones—was making her period of voluntary bondage as lively as possible. There never was so energetic a sleeper as Mrs. Pancrust. With her funny, little figure, whose breadth almost equalled its length, comfortably ensconced in the large arm-chair—her little, fat hands crossed before her—and her feet resting on a footstool, she made a regular business of it; and probably imagined herself a locomotive, letting off steam—for she snored, and puffed, and sighed with a vehemence that was, to the uninitiated, perfectly startling. Her face, that looked like a full moon, with a bit of cap-border just visible around it, was puffed out, as though she were blowing some imaginary trumpet; while her mouth was puckered up into a round O.

Just opposite was a perfect daguerreotype of the performance in the shape of Marion Feld—Mrs. Feld's grand-daughter—a talented, mischievous girl of fifteen; who, not feeling at all disposed to sleep, and being rather dreary from the want of companionship, had wandered into the dining-room, and struck with the old housekeeper's ludicrous appearance, now sat faithfully imitating each contortion. Naughty Marion! A talent for mimicry was her besetting sin; and she now sat puffing out her cheeks, and puckering her mouth, and going gradually backward, and catching herself up again; while her long, light curls swayed back and forth with the violence of her motions.

The solitary spectator of the scene smiled, in spite of himself; but then a graver expression rested on his half pensive face, as he gazed earnestly on Marion Feld, standing almost upon the

threshold of womanhood. But she did not see him; and quite unsuspected in his retreat, he watched the roguish face that was growing quite red with the unwonted exercise.

Suddenly Mrs. Pancrust opened her eyes. One would naturally expect, in *her* case, a gradual cooling off before the waking world fairly beamed upon her sight; but she was now wide awake, without the least warning. Marion, never at a loss, proceeded with her slumbers as naturally as though the contortions had originated with herself. Mrs. Pancrust was surprised; she had never seen such sleeping before; and in a tone of perplexed commiseration, she murmured,

"Poor child! What *dreadful* faces she does make!"

This was too much for Marion's gravity; with a sudden outburst of laughter she sprang up, and, without replying to the astonished housekeeper, rushed from the apartment. Suddenly she encountered the quiet student, Wallace Hampton; and beneath the half disapproving gaze of those earnest eyes, her own grew grave.

"Marion," said he, kindly, as he drew her into one of the deep recesses at the window, "it was remarkably well done—as well as anything of the kind *could* be done—but would it not be better to attempt a higher field of action? To devote those talents to some wiser purpose?"

He was a great deal older than she, to be sure; but it must be because he was studying for a minister that Marion received so meekly from her cousin what she felt very much disposed to term "lectures." She was both motherless and fatherless; a sort of waif whom Mrs. Feld received from her son as the price of his folly in marrying when she had expected better things of him; and not much subdued by the capricious severity of her grandmother, Marion grew up like a luxuriant vine that had never been trained. She supposed that it was always people's fate to be scolded by somebody, and listened to Wallace Hampton quietly and submissively.

"You have both talent and perseverance, Marion," continued her cousin, "you have access to books that are in themselves as inestimable mines—you have one who is competent, from his longer experience, to explain any difficulties that may arise, and who is willing to use that ability

to its very extent—is it not, therefore, your own fault if you throw away the opportunity of becoming an intelligent and talented woman?"

He had touched the right chord. Marion's ambition was aroused; and in the long, summer days, when, in the garden below, the bee went culling sweets from flower to flower, Marion sat drawing intellectual draughts from a fountain that never fails.

The patient young teacher was sometimes half bewildered by his pupil's quickness, and thirst for all sorts of information; and when Marion's natural propensities triumphed, and audacious freaks of mischief quite upset his philosophy, he experienced the deepest sympathy for those unfortunates of his own sex who undertake the management of a whole school of girls. Running the gauntlet to Indian music seemed a pleasant exercise in comparison. Sometimes Marion had deep fits of demureness, when she appeared sincerely penitent for former misdemeanors; and Wallace believed this penitence sincere, and only opened his eyes to be deceived again.

There was, to be sure, much stumbling and halting in their progress up the hill of knowledge; but the guide was patient, and the goal seemed nearly won. And in the quiet, summer days Marion sat in the library, and gazed on the grave, earnest face of her teacher, and took to her heart something that grew with her youth, and strengthened with her strength.

Was she not a faithful pupil? For she conned a lesson more than he had given her to learn.

But what has this to do with "Mysterious Knockings?" A great deal with those who believe that "as the twig is bent the tree is inclined;" for the Marion Feld in the picture is the same mischievous girl who mimicked the slumbers of the old housekeeper. To be sure, her long curls are now twisted back, and four years have given her a more mature appearance; but there she is, listening to the first magical sound of "Mysterious Knockings."

We must go back a little.

Two pleasant years glided by, and Wallace Hampton ceased to play the part of teacher to a half-trained girl, and went forth into the world to find a field of action more suited to his abilities; and Marion stayed in the old house until she fairly loathed the quiet village with its everlasting stillness. She could not help feeling that she was capable of something better than making up such unreasonable quantities of ruffled pillow-cases; but Mrs. Feld delighted in these inexhaustible stores, and although she never had a daughter, she had always been preparing for somebody's wedding. Who was to be the victim

it seemed impossible to tell; but the old lady had certainly worked herself up to the conviction that a marriage would come upon her as unexpectedly as a housebreaker in the dead of night, and with this prophetic feeling it behooved her to be in readiness.

During the long winter evenings, Marion, when quite a child, sat reading to her grandmother "The Children of the Abbey," or "The Mysteries of Udolpho;" and this duty was anything but a task. Sometimes, by way of antidote, Mrs. Feld would request passages from "Young's Night Thoughts," or "Paradise Lost;" but Marion soon found that her auditor was very apt to nod over gloomy philosophy and sublime descriptions; and when her grandmother had been fairly read to sleep, she would draw forth the enticing volume with renewed zest.

And there they would sit in the pleasant, curtained room; the winter wind moaning without—the old lady asleep in her arm-chair—and little Marion quite absorbed in her novel.

Then came those pleasant days that she loved to think of, even now, when she sat with Wallace Hampton in the library, and conned whole volumes of ancient lore—volumes that Mrs. Feld considered far inferior to her own substantial receipt-book. When her teacher left, the place became a dreary blank; and a feeling of utter weariness ensued, while Marion looked about in vain for some excitement.

What a tame, quiet set their neighbors were! How perseveringly the women knit, and brewed, and baked, and tended baby between spells, until the spirit of degeneration seemed fairly satisfied with its dominion there, and contemplated its disciples with pleasurable feelings! How the very clergyman from the pulpit encouraged this degraded conduct by such quotations as, "Wives, be in subjection unto your husbands," "A virtuous woman is above all price," followed by dissertations upon the vanity of adornment, and the utter wildness and impracticability of ever aspiring to any higher station than that of a respectable domestic animal, until Marion, animated by the restless spirit of mischief, longed to stir up a revolt.

At length, however, her desire for a change seemed likely to be realized. In the first place, Marion, to her great surprise, became an heiress. A maternal aunt, after whom she had been named, and whose only acknowledgment of the compliment while living was an infant's set of coral, died, and left her niece a sum of money, which to the country people appeared really enormous. Marion's love of excitement was gratified immediately; having, with some difficulty

persuaded her grandmother to agree to her contemplated improvements, she went to work at the old farm-house with all the energy of an active genius.

How often had she and Wallace talked of a conservatory to be entered from the very room in which they studied; how often had been planned the arrangement of every flower and shrub; and, now that he was expected back, with all his clerical honors fresh upon him, how pleasant it would be to surprise him with a sight of the conservatory, as the Empress of China had been surprised at the erection of Aladdin's Palace in a single night? The old farm-house was almost turned into a fairy region, and Marion contemplated her improvements with no small degree of complacency—but the roc's egg was still wanting to render it complete.

Before Wallace arrived, came the "Mysterious Knockings," and no wonder that the wandering spirits, who seem to have plenty of leisure on their hands, should have devoted themselves to the task of waking up the people of Muddy Hollow. Never were so sleepy a set collected together; and when the licensed knockers took up their abode at the principal hotel, they suddenly awoke as from a dream. A knock, now-a-days, meant something; it was not a merely expressed wish to get in—it afforded a theme for speculation. The spiritual visitants certainly knocked to some purpose, and must have found their ethereal natures sadly encumbered by the earth dross which they carried off from the people of Muddy Hollow.

Marion Feld was kept in a constant state of amusement; for old Mrs. Pancrust had been most violently seized with the disorder, and existence, to her, was now one continual knock. Mrs. Pancrust dropped into uneasy slumbers under the mesmerism of mysterious knockings—she opened her ears to these sounds at early dawn—and she looked as though she were perpetually saying to herself,

"I hear a knock you cannot hear."

How often did she sit and count a series of knockings, and draw prognostications therefrom—little suspecting that the mysterious performers were Marion, and a poker, in the next apartment!

Mrs. Pancrust labored in vain to make a convert of the mischievous girl; she laughed at all her theories, and boldly expressed her opinion that the mysterious knockers might find some better employment. The old housekeeper was shocked at this skepticism; and some dreadful warning from the incensed spirits was the very

least of what she expected for such incredulity. Marion, however, continued unpunished; and the day approached for Wallace's return.

Great were the preparations for the young minister's visit; but as the hour approached, the heiress became more and more nervous while wondering whether her teacher's manner would be as cordial as ever. What would he think of the conservatory? Perhaps it might look to him like self-conceit, puffed up by the consciousness of heiress-ship. Marion roved restlessly around, and, at first, resolved to meet him frankly at the front door; then she thought it better to sit in state on the sofa; and finally, when he really did arrive, she ran to the room opening into the conservatory, and concealed herself among the folds of the curtains.

Here, partly in mischief, partly in embarrassment, she stood, awaiting his entrance; and at the first sound of his step in the apartment, it seemed as though the beating of her heart must be distinctly audible. How she tried to control this agitation, and how it wouldn't be controlled! And then she thought of Mrs. Pancrust's predictions, and wondered if this was "Mysterious Knockings?"

Wallace Hampton passed on—so close that he seemed almost to touch her; and as he looked about him, he appeared like one bewildered. He entered the conservatory; but, having advanced a few steps, he stood still, with folded arms, and seemed lost in a reverie. Marion, half piqued that he had not continued his search, emerged from her hiding-place, and stood noting the alterations of two years. His high, broad forehead seemed more lofty than ever—his mouth was graver than of old—and he looked so proud, and calm, and erect, that Marion half feared to arrest his attention. That troublesome heart, how it kept beating! And while she stood there, undecided, Mrs. Pancrust entered the room in quest of her.

"Why, Miss Marion!" she exclaimed, "what is the matter? Mr. Wallace has arrived, and gone to look for you."

"Hush!" whispered Marion, "I am listening to 'Mysterious Knockings.'"

Mrs. Pancrust was both awed and delighted; and in the same low tone she replied,

"How many knocks were there?"

"Oh!" said Marion, with a laugh at her companion's eagerness, "I really do not know—they were so numerous that I couldn't count them."

Mrs. Pancrust stood a few moments and pondered. At last, she had hit it.

"Miss Marion," said she, solemnly, "depend upon it that the spirits have determined upon

your being an old maid. You have brought this upon yourself!"

But Marion received this communication with such an outburst of laughter that Wallace, roused from his contemplation by the familiar sound, was soon standing beside his old pupil, with a greeting as cordial as in those golden times.

But as the young clergyman glanced around upon the handsome furniture, the conservatory, and all the adornments of wealth, he sighed at the thoughts of the chasm between himself and the heiress. She could never again seem like the same simple girl of old; and again that proud, lofty look fell upon Marion's heart like a chill. Was this the meek charity that thinketh evil of none? Marion could have taught the clergyman a lesson that would have been of more value to him than twenty sermons.

Wallace was, of course, fêted and courted by his old associates of Muddy Hollow; but he soon discovered that their minds were engrossed by a more important subject than his arrival. "Mysterious Knockings" were familiar words in every house; and it was probably owing to their very slow natures in receiving an idea that they now clung with such tenacity to the spiritual rappers.

"This is really too foolish," said Wallace, one evening, as he gave a ludicrous account of a visit that had been interrupted by mysterious knockings, "all the village seem to have gone crazy!"

Notwithstanding her reverence for the newly created clergyman, Mrs. Pancrust could not quietly hear him denounce her favorite theory. She bustled, and fidgetted, and finally asked,

"Did you never hear any knockings, Mr. Wallace?"

"I must indeed be deaf," he replied, with a smile, "did I not hear the thundering raps with which you daily recall me from the land of dreams—but I may safely assert that I have never yet heard any knocks for which I could not satisfactorily account, without calling in supernatural assistance."

"Your time will come," said Mrs. Pancrust, shaking her head disapprovingly at this levity.

"Every dog has his day," I suppose," continued Wallace, "but perhaps, Mrs. Pancrust, you may succeed in overcoming my skepticism, if you can convince me that this spiritual interference is really beneficial. You have visited the rappers, of course—what did they tell you?"

"Why," said Mrs. Pancrust, brightening up, "they told me that I had lived here for twenty years—I am sure *that* was true."

"Very true indeed," replied Wallace, "but were you not aware of it before? Was this the extent of their communications?"

"No," said Mrs. Pancrust, half suspecting that she was being played upon, "they told me that I was a widow, and without children."

"Also very true," said Wallace, scarcely able to contain himself at these revelations, "but certainly, not very *new*."

"Well," rejoined Mrs. Pancrust, somewhat roused by his contempt, "I am not the only one in the house who has heard spiritual knockings. The very day that you came home, I found Miss Marion standing by the curtains, listening to 'em!"

"Oh, Mrs. Pancrust!" exclaimed Marion, in the direst confusion lest Wallace might possibly understand, "how *could* you!"

"Why, la, Miss Marion," replied the simple-minded housekeeper, "I'm sure you told me so, yourself! And I remember just how you stood when you said it—you had your hand on your heart, and I think you were looking at Mr. Wallace in the conservatory, and——"

Wallace was startled by the abrupt departure of Marion Feld, with cheeks of a crimson hue, and yet a disposition to laugh seemed strangely struggling with a sense of embarrassment.

"She did," continued Mrs. Pancrust, who felt extremely puzzled, "she told me, when I asked her what was the matter, that she had been listening to mysterious knockings. I expected something to happen to her, that afternoon—she acted so queer-like; and when you came, she ran away, and I had to go and find her."

"What did the knockers say?" inquired Wallace, who, to Mrs. Pancrust's great delight, appeared quite interested.

"Why," said she, "Miss Marion told me that she couldn't count 'em, and I thought it must mean that she was to be an old maid; but when I told her so—la! he's off—how queer people do act now-a-days—it must be the knockings, though."

So thought the old housekeeper as her auditor departed in the midst of her reply; and the next moment she was quietly at work upon her stocking, toeing it off with the greatest precision.

Wallace was not quite a fool; and this account of mysterious knockings gave him some insight into matters and things. He felt quite as much interested as Mrs. Pancrust could be that the mysterious knockings should not turn out no knockings at all; and then the mischievous face of the young hoyden, as she sat feigning sleep on that summer afternoon, seemed to rise up before him and laugh at him for his pains. He roamed about in a state of indecision. What should Marion care for *him*? It was only some

of her mischievous nonsense—besides, she was now an heiress, and he a poor minister.

So he thought, and reasoned, and walked into the conservatory; and there stood Marion. She blushed violently when he came in, and, anxious to break what she feared would prove an awkward silence, she said the very thing that she should not have said, and gayly exclaimed,

"A penny for your thoughts!"

"I was thinking," said Wallace, quite innocently, "of 'Mysterious Knockings.'"

Down went the rose that she was pulling to pieces, and away rushed Marion; but Wallace caught the hand that she had extended to open the door, and, quite in the old schoolmaster tone, he continued,

"I want these 'Mysterious Knockings' explained."

"Did *you* never hear any knocks, Mr. Wallace?" said Marion, mischievously, as she mimicked the old housekeeper.

"It cannot be," said Wallace, half sadly, "that a young lady should take a fancy to throw away youth, beauty, and wealth on a poor minister, who has nothing to give in return but *love*—the spirits must have made a mistake this time—is it not so, Marion?"

She did not withdraw her hand; but bending her head until he could scarcely see her face, she said, "if you mean *me*, I have no heart to give—I lost it when I was only fifteen."

"Is it possible," exclaimed Wallace, "that you could think of fancying a pale, grave student like me!"

"I didn't say that it was *you*," returned Marion, looking absolutely saucy, "I was only beginning to tell you, in imitation of a heroine whom I once admired, that I could only offer you a heart that had loved once before. I thought it 'best to be off with the old love before I was on with the new.'"

Wallace only looked as he did of old when reproving his pupil's mischievous propensities; and Marion, by way of relieving her confusion, exclaimed,

"How ridiculous! you are as bad as the old dominie you used to complain of; you began with 'Mysterious Knockings,' and you have wandered off to four years ago!"

"The knocks," said Wallace, "have been explained, probably more to *my* satisfaction than Mrs. Pancrust's. She will feel disappointed, injured, perhaps, when she finds that these 'Mysterious Knockings' have turned out 'all for love.' She will never forgive you, Marion, for making what she will doubtless consider 'Much Ado About Nothing.' And grandmother, too, what will *she* say?"

"Your expression," said Marion, "would seem to add, 'Look in *my* face, and you'll forget them all!'"

So Marion Field became a minister's wife.

EARTHLY HOPES.

BY MARY L. MEANY.

"AND so Thursday is to be your wedding day, Evy?" said a young girl to her companion, as they sat together in the pleasant parlor of a neat dwelling in the beautiful queen city of the West. "As you have, at length, made Ernest happy by naming the day, I suppose your dress is finished," she continued, looking up mischievously into the blushing face of Evy.

"Yes," replied the latter, as if only hearing the concluding words; "yes, my dress is finished: come up stairs, Clara, and you shall see it."

Clara needed no second invitation; and when she had entered her friend's prettily furnished chamber, and taken her accustomed seat beside the window, the bridal robe of plain white Tarlatan was brought from the wardrobe for her inspection. Clara, who was to be bridesmaid at the approaching ceremony, expressed approbation of the dress, as well as of several other matters on which her friend desired her opinion; and after a time rose to go, saying, "that as she had yet some preparations to make, and the day was so near at hand, she should have no time to lose."

"But you can be ready for Thursday, can you not, dear Clara?" asked Evy, somewhat anxiously, as they stood at the street door.

"Oh, I shall accommodate my arrangements to the time remaining, "was the laughing reply; "I do not think it likely that you will postpone the day on *my* account—yes, I will be ready," and she tripped lightly down the steps and disappeared.

Evy closed the door, and ascended to her apartment to put away the bridal dress. As she looked upon it other thoughts came into her mind, and she sat down on the low chair just vacated by Clara, casting many an unconscious glance at the opposite house in which dwelt her lover, so soon to be her husband. Her dress lay unheeded on the bed; and she sat thus for a long time busy with her thoughts: sweet and happy ones they must have been; for a bright smile often flitted over the dewy lips, giving a new charm to the joyous features which indeed seemed only made for smiles.

Cherish those sweet thoughts yet a little longer, young maiden—hug those visions of happiness still closer to thy bosom; for as a sudden tempest

cloud overspreading the fair arch of heaven, shall a dark, funeral pall banish thy bright visions—like blooming flowers wrested from the earth, and tossed upon the whirlwind to wither and to die, shall thy sweet hopes be uprooted from their resting-place, leaving but sorrow, and desolation, and darkness to thee. Cherish them, then, while thou mayest—enjoy the brief moments of bliss which they afford!

At the same hour that Evy sat talking with her friend, Ernest Wilson stood on the upper deck of one of the beautiful steamboats that plough the bright waters of the Ohio; not as one of the passengers, however, but to take leave of one of his early friends who was leaving for New Orleans, never perhaps to return to his native state. Brilliant prospects lured him onward, yet still he gazed with fondness and regret on the beautiful shore he was so soon to leave; for it is no commendable fortitude or philosophy which enables one to leave without emotion. the hallowed home of childhood; and there was a moisture which shamed not his manhood in the young traveller's eyes, as he withdrew his lingering gaze and turned to the friend, whom, as one link in the bright chain he was about to sever, he detained beside him to the last moment. The warning bell sounded, the groups on board began to separate; parting words were spoken; hands fondly grasped in a last warm pressure; and the next moment the separation was realized by many an aching heart, as the boat slowly and gracefully receded, as if willing to allow yet a few fond glances and signals between those who crowded the deck, and the saddened groups who saw them depart.

Ernest Wilson, who was one of the last to leave the boat, stood silently watching its quickening motion as it swept onward, throwing the clear waters in a shower of silvery spray around its wheels, and leaving a bright track of leaping waves to still its progress. The day was one of the loveliest of early autumn; the warm sun shone down goldenly from the cloudless sky, and as its radiant beams fell upon the graceful fabric; the fluttering pennant that streamed like a thing of life above; and the gayly dressed throngs that stood beside the railing, it presented a spectacle beautiful, yet solemn. How

tranquilly it glides through the opposing waves, though Ernest, as if conscious of its power, and laughing at the fears of the few who even now shrink, with dread, from the mighty engine. Onward it bounds—another moment and it will disappear. Hark! that fearful crash—that appalling scream of human agony and despair. The iron-bound monster has burst its fetters, and spread ruin and death through that gallant boat, with its freight, oh, how precious, of living, loving souls!

Ah! many a household will mourn—many a heart grow sad and earth-weary with the tidings that too soon will reach them. The expectant families that already in anticipation clasp the long absent ones to their hearts—the saddened and lonesome groups who have just bid adieu, for a season, to the loved and cherished—and others still, to whom the first intimation of the danger of their dear ones will be the intelligence of their awful fate. Oh, God, comfort them in their distress, and soothe their overwhelming sorrow—for what sorrow, what anguish can equal theirs.

When the first shock of awe and terror was past, and men sought the fatal wreck, others moved amongst the ghastly remains that had been hurled upon the shore, which but a few moments previous they had left unconscious of danger, and here, sad to relate, they discovered the lifeless remains of Ernest Wilson, so mangled and disfigured, that, but for papers found in his pockets, not even his friends who were present could have recognized that once proud and manly form. A huge fragment of iron that lay upon his chest, crushing him as it seemed into the earth, told the sad story of his doom; and several of his acquaintances who had collected on the spot sorrowfully undertook to convey his remains to the home which that morning he had left, buoyant in health and spirits.

Evy Ward was still sitting by her window, lost in reverie, when the sound of many footsteps coming through the usually quiet and lonely street aroused her; and looking out, she saw with astonishment several young men approaching bearing carefully a covered litter, while a large, but silent and solemn-looking crowd followed. They paused at old Mr. Wilson's house—the door was opened by one who had apparently preceded them—as they entered with their precious burden, Evy thought she heard a wild scream from the mother, though the sound was too unearthly in its agony to be distinguished—she saw the young man who was to be groomsmen at the approaching wedding dash the tears from his eyes as he replied to the question of a

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passer-by—she saw the look of horror which overspread the inquirer's face at the reply—and a suspicion of the dreadful truth rushed through her mind. At the same instant Mrs. Ward softly opened the door and approached her daughter, who, reading in her looks a confirmation of her fears, with a short, quick gasp, fell senseless in her mother's arms.

"And was it indeed Ernest, my Ernest, that I saw borne to his home dead—dead!" exclaimed Evy, wildly, when after several days she was able to sit up, and converse rationally with her mother. What a change had those few days made in that fair girl! How touching was the mournful expression of that young face—how full of unutterable anguish the tones of her once gay and joyous voice! The eyes of her tender parent filled with tears as she looked upon her child; but seeing how overpowering was the recollection of her bereavement she strove to comfort and soothe her; but her words for a time seemed to fall on an unheeding ear. It was Thursday, the day appointed for the wedding, and the recollection added to Evy's sorrow.

"My child, my poor child," said Mrs. Ward, at length, as she twined her arms about her trembling form, "do not give way thus. Bend humbly to the will of God, it is He that has afflicted you—rebel not, my child, against this dispensation."

"I know I should not, mother," replied Evy, with a fresh burst of tears. "But, alas! if you only knew how—oh, where can I find comfort now!"

"Look up, my sweet girl! He that has afflicted will comfort you—He will give you the strength you need. And remember, my own darling," added the mother, as she now sobbed aloud, "you are all I have—bear up for my sake against this."

The right chord was touched. Evy threw her arms fondly around her mother, "I am selfish, indeed, dearest mother, but I will no longer afflict you thus. I will try to be resigned." And with a strong effort Evy controlled her feelings, and went about the house as usual; and even tried to console Ernest's parents who were almost overpowered by the sudden and awful death of their eldest and favorite child. But the watchful eye of the anxious mother saw that all was not right with her gentle, uncomplaining daughter. The stroke had fallen too suddenly, too deeply on her young spirit; and with all her outward calmness, and assumed cheerfulness, she knew that the stricken heart was silently breaking. Slowly, but surely, this, her first deep

sorrow, was crushing the vital energies of that delicate young creature, so unfitted to struggle against her unexpected bereavement; and when the spring burst forth with gladness and beauty, Evy Ward bowed her head meekly to the stroke of death, and in her mother's arms breathed out her gentle, sorrowing spirit.

They laid her beside her betrothed, in the quiet church-yard; and deep and sincere was the grief of many for the two young beings so

sadly stricken down in the morning of their existence—an existence which had bid fair to be so bright and joyous. Mrs. Ward did not long survive the death of her only child. She sank into a decline, from which there was no recovery for one so lonely and desolate; and ere the anniversary of the fatal day which had carried sorrow and anguish to so many, and blighted forever so many pleasing hopes and bright anticipations, mother and daughter slept together in one grave.

THE COQUETTE.

BY E. W. DEWEES.

I AM a coquette by nature and by education, and I confess myself not ashamed of the title. My mother, who was a woman of fashion, had, however, but a small fortune, and from my earliest days she did not fail to impress upon me the fact, that I was to make my own way in the world by my charms, which were eventually to secure me a brilliant marriage. I was a child of uncommon beauty and promise, and a natural bias taught me early to understand, and co-operate in my mother's views. I happened once to overhear her instructions to the governess of the fashionable boarding-school, where I was educated, and I was struck with their boldness and good sense.

"Do not," said my mother, "trouble my sweet child's head with such stupid and useless things as history, geography and figures—I know nothing, and have never felt the need of knowing any thing about them. My daughter must of course learn to read and write a pretty hand, but I wish you to be so kind as to see that *most* of her time is devoted to dancing and music—in these important branches I wish her to excel. I have no objection to her learning a little French and Italian—it would perhaps be as well, but pray let this be secondary to the music and dancing. I beg you also to pay particular attention to her manners and deportment—teach her above all to be graceful, and you will fulfil the proudest wish of a mother's heart."

My teacher obeyed these instructions implicitly. I was placed before a mirror where I played on the piano or harp, to study my attitudes and expressions—and to these early lessons I must acknowledge my indebtedness for the acquirement of the angelic smile which accompanies my singing, and the exquisite grace which has, during my whole life, been so extremely admired. Ah, that smile has since then turned many a head!

My first conquest was effected before leaving school, though I did so at the age of fifteen. My youthful lover was a being full of enthusiasm—people said of genius—I only know he was very handsome, and a most ardent admirer. I met him by chance at first—afterward by appointment almost daily—our place of rendezvous was generally in a retired part of the spacious

grounds belonging to the boarding-school. Certainly we were two happy little fools, as we walked together beneath the spreading trees, saying I know not what foolish things to each other—but Arthur's love was so warm and ardent, that I, in some way, caught his spirit, and at the time almost fancied myself in earnest. This nonsense lasted more than a year, when it was interrupted by my being summoned to town to commence my career in the gay world. Arthur departed about the same time on a voyage to China, where he predicted he should soon acquire the fortune, which he took it for granted I was to share with him.

My mother, whom I had seen at but rare intervals since being placed at boarding-school, professed herself delighted with my appearance, manners, and accomplishments, and my outfit was in accordance with her hopes. My debut was a triumph. I became at once queen of the town, and saw half the men of the place at my feet. I was admired, flattered, quoted, adored, till, in truth, the wonder is that my head was not completely turned.

The first suitor in whom I felt any interest after poor Arthur, (to whom I remained faithful until after my debut) was a young man of good family, who lived with and supported his widowed mother, who was poor. He was extremely—splendidly handsome, and it pleased me to hear people remark as we walked together, "there go the handsomest man and woman in America;" but apart from this I had no liking for the fellow—he was a person of too violent passions, and wearied me by his too vehement addresses. I soon dismissed him. He expressed so much surprise at my sudden rejection of his suit, that I found it necessary to give him to understand what was really the case, that I had never, for a single moment, entertained the thought of marrying him. That he had but served to amuse and entertain my leisure hours.

He left me in violent anger—apparently quite in despair; I heard nothing more of him for several years, when I was informed that he had fallen into bad habits. So that it was well for me that I would have nothing to say to him. Some people, it is true, paid me the compliment of attributing this young man's ruin to his

disappointment in love, but my modesty forbids my believing myself capable of inspiring so deep an affection.

My suitors this winter were numberless, but though tempted by one or two splendid offers, I loved the life I was leading too ardently to be willing so early to resign it for the thralldom of an American marriage.

Another winter brought a renewal of the scenes of the last. I began to weary of their monotony—I longed for something startling and new. The idea struck me that I would have a duel fought on my account—no lives need be lost, and the circumstance would be but a kind of public tribute to my dreams. After a little reflection I selected two fashionable hot-headed youths, and encouraged the addresses of both at the same time. When I perceived they were both maddened by jealousy, I determined to act. One evening at a ball I accepted the hand of each for the same dance, and both came at the same moment to claim their partner. Each angrily asserted his rights, and dark glances were interchanged—they appealed to me to decide between them.

"Really gentlemen," I cried, with an air of indifference, "I cannot be troubled with such a trifle—you must settle it between you—and," I added, with a slight emphasis, "my *hand* shall be the prize of him who best asserts his claim to it." I turned away affecting not to hear the muttered angry words which the rivals were interchanging.

The next day I did not rise till near night; when I did so, I called for the evening papers, and soon found the following paragraph:

"We understand that two of our fashionable young townsmen left the city this morning at an early hour, to settle a dispute which occurred last night at Mrs. B——'s splendid ball. The beautiful and fascinating Miss C——, to whose charms both gentlemen have been doing homage, was the cause of the quarrel. As yet it is not known how the affair has terminated."

So far all was well, but soon the tidings came that by some strange chance the duel had terminated fatally—Charles C—— had been shot through the heart. I allow that I felt at first disposed to blame myself for the part I had taken in this affair, but surely some unusual ill-luck attended it, for now-a-days who ever dreams of duels terminating in bloodshed?—I certainly never *wished* it should do so. I was greatly shocked, and I did all I could to reconcile myself to this unfortunate *contre temps*. I reflected that the victim was but a worthless young man, and as he would probably, at best, have killed himself

by dissipation in a few years, it was perhaps, after all, no great harm if by being killed a few years sooner, by another, his death answered at least the purpose of contributing another laurel to my renown. No one knew the part I had taken in this affair, for the rival duelist had left the country, and I found myself more the rage than ever. Indeed so numerous were my conquests, that when I perceived a new lover beginning on the old theme, with as much energy as though he had hit upon something quite new and fresh, I could with difficulty restrain my mirth.

Among the throng of admirers one really interested me. He was a young gentleman of great talent, named Melville. He had a fine taste for music, and in my musical accomplishments I found I possessed a wand of enchantment by which to sway him to my will. I had a superb voice, and though I had been taught to warble in the Italian style, I had too much taste to confine myself exclusively to that school. I also sang ballads and delicate love songs, and it was these that Melville most delighted to hear. He often accompanied me with his own rich voice, or when I performed on the harp or piano, he would join with his flute, making "most excellent music."

I exerted myself to the utmost to enslave young Melville, for he was no easy or willing conquest—indeed report said that he was already engaged to be married to a very sweet young lady. That, however, was his affair, not mine, and at length I had the satisfaction of perceiving that his fortress of strength had fallen—that he was madly in love with me.

To punish him for the difficulty I had had in his capture, I continued my allurements after I was sure of my prey. I suffered him more than once to speak of his love, ere I thought it worth while to deceive him as to mine. By the way, my mother wished me to accept this man, as he was of good family and great talents, but it did not satisfy my ambition to marry a man of small fortune, and so I silenced my mother. It was long ere I could convince young Melville that I was in earnest in discarding him, but after a long conversation, which left no doubt in his mind, he rushed from me in a state of great excitement and agitation, crying, "oh, Clara, Clara, you have killed me!"

I had witnessed similar scenes too often to be much alarmed at this, but what was my surprise when the next day, the intelligence reached me that young Melville had put an end to his existence. I was truly shocked by this occurrence, but after all it was really no fault of mine—no woman can be blamed for not marrying a man,

merely because he wishes it, and will kill himself if she refuses him. In truth, Melville should have contented himself with the poor, love-sick maiden, his first choice, who, as I hear, went crazy for his sake.

About this time my old, first lover, Arthur, returned from Canton, having acquired a moderate fortune. He came to see me the very day of his arrival. He found me in the music-room surrounded by gentlemen. Though he was much altered in his appearance, I knew him instantly, and went forward to meet him with a cordial greeting—my first glance at his agitated face convinced me that certain passages in our early life were forgotten. I determined to improve my advantage—he should own that I was not less charming than of old. I exerted all my powers of fascination. I sang, and my voice was never clearer or richer. I seized a happy moment and sang a tender little refrain of faithful, early love; at its close I raised my eyes to Arthur's face, and saw him turn aside to conceal his emotion. I read in his glance passionate love—fervent gratitude. I fancied that my work was done, my captive bound hand and foot, and condescended to throw a few favors to my other expectant suitors. I saw the cloud of displeasure which darkened Arthur's brow, but I heeded it not—what queen heeds the frown of her slave?

I saw Arthur constantly. He seemed to have no power to absent himself from me, though sometimes he would struggle to break the net of enchantment which I had thrown over him. I perceived his efforts to regain his freedom, and in my heart resented them, yet gloried all the more in my power, which, against his will, brought this proud, strong man to my feet—still his struggles were silent; he never spoke to me of love till one eventful evening which I shall never forget.

My mother had rented a house in the country for the summer, and we were living there. A few friends were spending the evening with us, and Arthur was of the number. The party broke up early, and after my mother had retired I still sat musing over the events of the night. I went to a small writing-table of mine which was in the room, and took from it a bundle of love-letters from various admirers, thinking I would read some of them over. Among them I found a miniature of Arthur, given me in our early love-making; as I was looking at it to discover whether he had changed for the better or worse in his absence, I heard a slight noise among the rose-bushes outside the low window, which was behind me. I turned, and saw Arthur gazing at me with eyes full of the deepest sorrow; he stepped quietly through the window into the

parlor without saying a word—only that sad, stern look in his eyes.

I had no power to ask him what it meant. I trembled, like one who waits silently to hear some dreadful tidings. At last he spoke,

"Clara, I have come to bid you an eternal farewell!"

My heart grew cold at his words, but trying to rally, I said haughtily,

"You have chosen, sir, a most unseasonable hour for the purpose——"

"Pardon me," he said, "it seems not so to me—yet pardon me." He spoke like one in a dream—his eyes still fixed upon me.

My courage revived, and the spirit of coquetry returning, I said gaily,

"Gracious heavens, Arthur, how you frighten me—how strangely you look to-night! I do believe you are in love!"

His whole aspect changed at my words.

"I am!" he cried, "wildly, fondly, madly, passionately in love with a vain, heartless woman, whom I would not marry for kingdoms. Oh, God, to find that during all those years I have been worshipping a beautiful *body*, to which there is no lovely, corresponding soul—degrading, humiliating thought. Yet, though I feel all this, I am so weak—so miserable weak—that still—Clara, Clara, I love you still."

His whole form was convulsed, and he with difficulty refrained from falling at my feet.

I stepped back haughtily.

"Forgive me, Clara," he continued, more calmly, "I scarcely know what I am saying—remember I have come to say farewell—to take an eternal leave of you—you, my first and only idol—I entreat you to grant me one last favor. Do not think me too presuming when I entreat you—by the memory of those sweet days when we wandered together, pure as angels, in the deep forest, and when I carried you often in my arms like a little child—let me once more, in the same innocent spirit, fold you in my arms; it is a strange fancy, but fear me not—I would, if only for an instant, renew that youthful dream of bliss ere it vanishes forever. Grant my prayer, the last I shall ever make, and I leave you forever, but with one sweet thought to cheer much bitterness."

I know not what spell was on me, but I was wholly subdued to this man's will; a wild and tender love for him rushed over my soul with the conviction that he was lost to me forever. I stood silent, and trembling violently before him. He took my resistless form in his arms, and kneeling down, he looked sadly and tenderly in my eyes; it was the same look he had often given

me in old times, save that now a deep reproach was mingled with its love. He held me thus some moments—then slowly and solemnly, as we kiss the dead, he pressed his lips to mine—he released me—he was gone. I sprang to the window, I rushed out in search of him—I called him frantically—for the first time in my life reason ceased to rule my conduct, I believe that had he but returned to me, I should have thrown myself at his feet, and besought him who had but now so insulted me—besought him to love me still—to take me for what I was worth—but he came not, and thank God, I was spared that humiliation. He was gone—gone. I returned to the house in an agony of despair—I threw myself on the sofa, and lay there quite still the whole night through, while surging billows of love and anger swept alternately through my mind. Now, for the first time, I felt that I loved; not the tender, gentle youth of old, who was my slave, but the strong, proud, self-respecting man, who loved, yet scorned me—who “would not marry me for kingdoms.”

For many weeks after this time Arthur lay between life and death—a brain fever threatened both his life and reason—both, however, were spared—he recovered, and after a time he returned to society, and I met him often. He proudly avoided shunning me, and there was no need that he should—his heart was as cold to me as though the angel of death had touched it and turned it into ice. With that last kiss his soul had taken an eternal leave of mine—I was now more dead to him than if laid in my grave. All this I felt, and yet I, fool that I was, I loved him more than ever. The thought of him never left my mind—to bring him again to my feet was the only desire—the only wish I had in the world. But now that love had entered my heart, coquetry failed; for others I knew how to weave

spells of fascination which they could not resist. But when *he* was by my charms were broken—I became silent, almost awkward. At last in despair, I resolved to try what jealousy might do. I had at this time two wealthy lovers—one old and sensible, the other young and dissipated. Had I been forced to choose between them, my unbiased judgment would have declared unhesitatingly in favor of the elder suitor, but I wished Arthur to think my heart interested, and I, therefore, engaged myself to the younger. Had Arthur's manner given me a ray of encouragement, I would have instantly broken with my betrothed, and endeavored to win him back, but his heart was of marble, and things went on. To the last I was not without hope—on the very evening before my wedding, contrary to all etiquette, I horrified my mother by insisting on going to a ball at which I knew Arthur would be; determined that even then it should not be too late, if he would but grant me one ray of hope. I contrived to be his partner in the waltz. I threw myself with a peculiar *abandon* in his arms. I wished—I longed to feel his touch—I thought of that terrible night when I had lain in his arms—of my coming marriage—of my burning love—I felt his arm like a flame of fire around me—my brain grew dizzy—my dim eyes sought Arthur's face. It was pale, but stern as marble—there was no relenting there. Things began to fade before my eyes, the weight and darkness of the grave to fall upon me and I fainted.

On the morrow, in anguish and bitterness of heart, I gave my hand to the man I despised, and since that hour—it is now six weary years, I have never known one happy moment. My husband's jealousy makes me worse than a slave, and his detested love is my bitterest punishment.

"HEART-BROKEN."

BY SARA H. BROWNE.

STRANGE expression! strange idea! Who shall find for it synonym or definition, and yet who shall for an instant mistake its meaning? Indeed there are few who do not persuade themselves that at one time or another they have tasted its bitterness. The mother, as she resigns to his grave-slumbers her first born, in all the promise of a spring-time existence, with his golden curls, his laughing eyes, his accents of lisping endearment, and above all, with the sweet dawning of intellectual life, feels *she* not that her fond heart-strings are riven asunder with the crushing weight and suddenness of the stroke which has made her childless? The child, twice orphaned, as he stands by, and with convulsive sobbings beholds the remains of the last parent lowered into their narrow house, knowing that the wide world now contains not one to sympathize, or soothe, or succor—is not *his* young heart breaking with the agony of its utter desolation? The bridegroom, as he bends over his silent bride, whose motionless bosom is engirdled with a vesture even whiter and purer than that of her blissful espousals;—the wife, as the chosen of her soul, the pillar of her strength is confined and carried forever from her sight;—the lover, over whose extatic visions death has drawn his sable drapery—are not these heart-broken, every one?

No—these gaping and bleeding wounds will close again; time will pour in his Lethe drop, and change its oil and wine; and anon the heavens are blue again, the earth is green and beautiful, and life once more desirable and desired. But death is the only *healer* of the broken heart; his chill hand alone can cool its fervid fever heat; his ice-draught alone allay the throbbings of its mighty anguish; his earth-unction alone compose the fury of its tossing billows; and this is the difference between the two.

But in whatever consists a broken heart, it is something from which the stolid and insensible nature is forever exempt. It is the peculiar heritage of those spirits greatly endowed, and keyed to such a pitch of painful intensity that the string breaks instead of slackens under a rude and careless touch; of those who have from time to time been heard and seen in this

world though manifestly not of it; for the world will love and cherish its own; and these were strangers, and pilgrims, and fugitives; unrecognized and unacknowledged till they passed upward—and their train of living light first revealed to gaping mediocrity that a star had fallen from its leaden firmament.

A most melancholy task it is to glean this oft-recurring truth from the annals of genius; to note its repetition from old forgotten days down to the present. "Died of a broken heart!" Ah! how many a short and sad life-history, how many a perishing epitaph must wind up with those words of sorrowful signification! Some, alas, have little else to record, save that their subject lived, and wrote, and died, "heart-broken." Of others it is but the concluding item of a dubious catalogue, dug up from dusty fragments of the past, by a too late repentant generation—"he died of a broken heart!"

Thus it is written of Spenser—the ancient, the genial, the immortal. His castle is a prey to plebeian violence and consuming flames; his youngest born, cradled to its soft slumber, has strewn its dear ashes on that midnight pyre; and to a tempest of affliction is this dire calamity but the precursor;—homelessness, penury, neglect, injustice pursued him like a scourge of many cords; futile dependance on the favor of the great and princely utterly failed him in the hour of his extremity, and wrung from his soul such bitter words as these:—

"Full little knowest thou that hast not tryd,
What hell it is in suing long to byde;
To lose good days that might be better spent;
To waste long nights in pensive discontent;
To speed to-day, to be put back to-morrow;
To feed on Hope, to pine with fear and sorrow;
To fret thy soul with crosses and with cares
To eat thy bread with comfortless depairs;
To fawn, to crouch, to wait, to ride, to run,
To spend, to give, to want, to be undone!"

It is no wonder that an armed host like this, should soon overmaster its writhing and sensitive victim; he died a heart-broken wayfarer at a wayside inn! But then they honored his *dust* with many honors; they buried him with a grand display of funeral pomp under the arches of a grand old Minster, while poets and princes crowded around the open grave, and cast their

eulogies, and elegies, with the pens that wrote them, into the poet's tomb! Was it not an awful requital?

So too of Butler; whose comic genius had convulsed with mirth a wanton and dissolute age. In vain might he ask protection and aid from the very men, base, grovelling, time-serving natures that they were, who could shake in paroxysms of delight over Hudibras, and leave its author to die too poor to buy himself even a miserable grave!

So too of Dryden, the rich, the caressed, and courtly. A wearying, wasting canker at his heart, partially veiled indeed from public observation by the splendor of state and fashion; obliterated too from his own perceptions full often in the deep-drained goblet of fiery wine, and the whirlpool of midnight riot and revelling; but still ever ready with returning reason to take again its vampyre station at his hearthstone, there sapping the life-blood of domestic peace! Let it be nameless, this devouring grief of a great and gifted nature. Alas! it has stung to madness and ruin many a meaner mind, from the wise man's time, who fitly likened it to a "continual dropping in a very rainy day," even to our own.

And what shall we say of Chatterton—that meteor of genius, who yet in his boyish years had drained a cup of disappointment and misery so intensely bitter, as to rush on the extinguishment of the lamp of loathed life in suicidal haste, rather than encounter the tardier tortures of starvation!

And what of Burns, the people's darling—the poet of the plow;—whose life was a series of errors and misfortunes;—whose untimely death aroused a world to the sense of greatness and glory departed;—whose cherished memory can,

after a lapse of years, assemble thousands on thousands

"Of every name and nation, age and race,"

to do homage to the place of his nativity, the spots he frequented, the places and objects on which his immortal verse has conferred a like immortality?

And what of Keats, and Shelley, and Landon, and many more whose glory and fame have arisen Phoenix-like from the ashes of a broken heart? Who, having spread their wings, displaying plumage of ethereal dye, have sadly folded them again, because they found this weary world was made for men to delve, and crawl, and squabble upon, and not for those strange and uncomprehended beings who could soar at will above its mists into eternal sunlight, or plunge down deeper than its most unfathomable recesses. And the mind, lighted with a spark of divinity itself, failing satisfactorily to answer the insolent query of the ignoble herd, "*why, and what, do ye more than others?*" becomes a mark for the poisoned arrows of malice, contempt, insult, and ignominy;—or also a victim to that miscaled kindness, which flatters, and pampers, and promises, but to make the heart sick unto death by reason of its hopes deferred!

Would there were fewer blots like these upon the records of genius in all its departments; but let these suffice to fix and to fire the high resolve of all coming ages, that henceforth it shall be duly recognized, tenderly cherished, carefully pruned, and wisely directed: and at the close of a natural and illustrious life, shorn of those excrescences of vice and sensuality, which so often have marred the history of the gloriously gifted, come down to its honored graves a golden grain shock, fully ripe and ready for the rich garner-house of an illimitable existence!

THE RED RIBAND.

BY H. J. BEYERLE, M. D.

I.

A warm day in August was approaching its end. The highest peaks of the Harz Mountains were already gilded by the last rays of the setting sun, while upon the smaller hills and in the valleys, the trees and shrubs cast long shadows upon the ground.

Along a narrow path, meandering between gigantic trunks of gloomy oaks, three young men were walking, whose exterior testified that they were disbanded soldiers. They wore grey pantaloons, short-skirted blue coats, yellow buttons, red collars, and round caps with stripes of the same color, and each carried a travelling bundle, arranged in the form of a ring, which lay upon the right shoulder, and hung down over the left hip.

Suddenly the forest became thinner, the trees on both sides disappeared, and the travellers stood upon the bare ridge of a mountain, at the foot of which expanded a romantic valley. The mist of the evening had spread a pellucid veil over the lowlands, so that the houses of a village, which hung at the hill-side like swallows' nests, presented the appearance of a painting formed by the reflected rays of light. The gilded ball on the top of the white church-steeple, projecting far above the plain of mist, glowed like a meteor in the rays of the setting sun, and the long and narrow windows of the church glistened like plates of polished steel. A dark range of hills formed the nearest background of the beautiful landscape, and the brilliant peak of the gigantic Brocken, the most distant prospect, gave the picture a more than earthly appearance.

As if one and the same thought struck the young men, they stood still and looked into their native vale. Their sunburnt faces reddened in silent joy, for not one was willing to betray his emotion to the other; and in the eyes of one, whose more regular features distinguished him from the rest, a few tears began to glitter, which, as he continued to look at the village, rolled upon the long auburn eyelashes, whence they were wiped away by the hand.

"This is our home!" exclaimed the liveliest, as he glanced smiling over the valley.

"God be praised!" cried a second, "no war has raged here, it still presents the old physiognomy—prosperity to our home!"

"Prosperity to our home!" cried his two companions, with emotion.

"Is it not so, Conrad?" said the first again, "our Harz Mountains present a more pleasing prospect than the plains of Holstein, which we have half and half preserved to Germany. If we could have got the mischievous Danes within our aim, where they are not backed by their ships, I think their desire for German soil would be gratified forever."

"Let the war alone," said Conrad, and rubbed his eyes as if he desired to have a clearer view—"at least the war from which we return. Here is our home, the picture of peace—do not disturb the charming prospect by such recollections as are detested in my inmost soul."

"Conrad," replied the third, laughingly, "and you have charged the rough-haired red-coats with the butt end of your musket like a lion, as if you would drive them all from the German soil with one stroke. Does the medal, which you carry in your coat-pocket, afford you no pleasure?"

"I entreat you be still," replied Conrad, in a sad tone of voice; "had I not received it for saving the life of my major, the Count Rudolph, I believe I would not have accepted it. The count thinks as I do, therefore he left the service when the amnesty was concluded, and returned to his castle, which looks so pleasantly over the tops of yonder forest trees."

"Do you really believe that it was aversion to the war that has induced him to withdraw from the army?" said the first speaker. "Conrad, you stand in an intimate and confidential relation with the count, and do you not know the true reasons why he withdrew? I will state it to you."

"Well?" inquired two voices, simultaneously.

"Not aversion, but love, has brought him back to his estates."

"Yes, the love of his cousin, Emma von Linden, who has lived for several years—since she is an orphan—at the mansion of old Baron von H—," added the third; "I might have thought of this, as they talked about it before we joined our regiment."

"Miss Emma is said to possess a valuable estate—this would come very handy to our count, as his affairs are not in the best condition."

"Well," said Conrad, "I don't know a nobleman in the country, who is more deserving of the hand of the beautiful Emma and her large estate, I wish him happiness in this marriage. But let us on," he continued, "the summit of the Brocken is already purple, and daylight disappears in the valley—come."

With these words he adjusted his bundle, and vigorously walked on, his companions following.

"See," whispered one to the other, "how Conrad runs. One might think he had made no more than an hour's journey to-day, instead of having travelled many miles."

"Look forward, and you will behold the magnet which attracts him—it becomes visible just now."

"Where?"

"Yonder, where the smoke curls up from the white chimney."

"Is not that where *la belle* Mary lives?"

"Yes, the handsomest girl in the village. Conrad is in love with her."

"I remember, I heard people talk of it."

"I would like to know why he keeps the matter so secret. He has never once spoken of it."

"Comrades!" now cried Conrad, who had gained a start of a hundred paces, and stood at a turn of the road, "why do you linger? Forward! In ten minutes we are at the mill; I already hear the roaring of the water, and the rattling of the wheels."

The two broke off their conversation and redoubled their steps. The way now led through a small birch wood. In a few minutes they emerged from it upon a fragrant meadow. The twinkling stars began to appear, and a white veil of mist extended over the earth.

Not a word disturbed the silence of the evening. Silently the young men looked at the village, as one window after another began to be lighted up. The meadow was soon passed, and now the wanderers stood under a large linden, whose gigantic branches covered a sedge roof, beneath which was heard the monotonous rattling of a mill.

"Good night, friends!" said one, "I have reached home. Here dwells my old mother, who still fancies her son on the sea-coast, or perhaps under the earth. I will enter the house softly. Good night!"

"Good night, Philip," whispered the others. He noiselessly opened the meal-covered door, and disappeared.

When Conrad and his companion passed the gable-end of the mill, they heard through the small open window the loud sobs of a woman. Philip held his old mother in his arms.

At the church Conrad's fellow-traveller left him. The young man continued on, alone, toward

the opposite end of the town, where the houses clung to the very hill-side.

Suddenly he halted before a white-washed cottage, whose windows were lighted up just as he came there. "Here Mary lives," he whispered to himself. "I wonder whether I shall give her as pleasant a surprise as Philip did his mother? No," he added, after a little reflection, "she lives by herself upon her little farm, her father having died five years ago. I will give the jealous people no material for their slandering tongues; my Sister Rosa shall call her to our house, as if she had a secret to impart. Good evening, Mary."

In ten minutes he was welcomed by the shouts of his sister, who was eating supper with her servants when he entered the neat apartment.

II.

BUT while Conrad thus anticipated unalloyed happiness in the future, fate was filling for him, even at this moment, a cup full of woe.

The nearest neighbor of Mary was Valentine, the newly appointed village magistrate, who had formerly been schoolmaster. He was pompous and penurious, but had always borne a good character; and on the death of Mary's father, became guardian of the village heiress.

This magistrate had a wild, spendthrift nephew, who held the office of district forester to Count Rudolph. From the consequences of more than one folly, the uncle had saved the young man. Only the last week he had paid a fine to prevent Eberhard's being punished, and had angrily vowed it should be the last. After many reproaches from the uncle, the nephew had said that his excesses were, in part, the result of loving unsuccessfully.

"You in love," cried the magistrate, staring at Eberhard through his spectacles.

"Yes! why not? It is with your ward, Mary."

When the first surprise of the magistrate had passed, he grew all at once strangely lenient to his nephew. He knew that, beside the farm she inherited, Mary would receive a dowry of three thousand dollars, on her wedding day, from Count Rudolph, who was her foster-brother. "Hem," he said, at last, "you are not the fool I took you to be. But why don't you press your suit?"

"She gives me no encouragement. Yet, perhaps," added Eberhard, "if you would speak for me, I might hope."

"Not badly said, boy," replied the magistrate, pompously, "I am her guardian; she will listen to me. Strike while the iron's hot says the old proverb, so, if you are ready, we'll visit her at once."

Accordingly the magistrate, taking his cane, and followed by his nephew, had gone to see Mary; and was with her at the very moment Conrad passed. But the guardian failed in his negotiation. Mary, however, was compelled to acknowledge her love for Conrad: and Eberhard went away vowing revenge.

His disappointment was greater, indeed, than even his uncle supposed. Eberhard had become acquainted with a fellow forester, belonging to another district, who was as much older in vice as he was in years, and who had led the young man to gamble beyond his means. Eberhard was even now in fear of a prison, in consequence of being unable to pay a sum of money, that would soon be due, but which he could not discharge, in consequence of having lost so much at play. Though Mary had always looked coldly on him, he had hoped that time, and his uncle's influence, would induce her to alter her mind; but this expectation was now over; and all future prospect of her relenting likewise was cut off, for she loved Conrad, who, he had heard that very day, was soon to return from the war covered with honor.

The next day, which was Sunday, Eberhard, gloomy and sullen, was in the forest when unexpectedly he met his elder comrade, Graff. The latter, noticing Eberhard's troubled face, insisted on knowing the reason: and finally the young man told him all.

"Come," said Graff, when Eberhard had done, "the affair will not be as bad as you imagine. Let us strike into this path toward the tavern; we'll take a drink together; and perhaps the wine will give us some good advice."

Arm-in-arm they followed the footpath, which, in ten minutes, led them to a clearing, on which stood a small house. It was inhabited by an old hunter, who, in summer-time, offered drinks and eatables for sale.

The two entered this little tavern, and calling for the best wine, sat down in a room whose windows faced the forest. Graff related anecdotes, at which Eberhard, whose head by and by began to feel the effects of the wine, laughed from his very heart, and soon forgot debts and marriage.

Evening had, in the meantime, completely set in. In the west, a thunder-storm was rising; but in the east shone the moon, lighting, with her melancholy rays, the silent and fragrant forest.

The conversation of the two hunters had now come to an end, and Eberhard's heavy head lay on the table: he had evidently drunk too much. Graff contemplated in silence the evening landscape through the open window. The room was dark, and in the other parts of the solitary house

all was quiet; for the two hunters were the only guests this evening.

Suddenly Graff heard a conversation in the forest. He listened. It seemed to come from persons advancing on the road from the village, which was about half an hour's walk distant. After a few minutes two persons emerged from the wood into the dimly lighted open place; they walked slowly, arm-in-arm, gaily conversing. Graff, retreating into the shadow of the room, listened.

"Had not we better stop here, Conrad?" said the female voice, "the thunder-storm will overtake us before we can regain the village."

"Just as you say, my Mary," replied the voice of a man. "Let us sit upon the bench under the window, and wait until my sister, Rosa, comes. I hope she will hurry, when she looks at the dark heavens."

"In Rosa's place I would have gone to my aunt some other day," said Mary, again; "it would have been better if we had remained together to-day, and celebrated your arrival by making a party to the Ilsenstein."

"You are right, dear Mary, but aunt is an old woman, who is much concerned on my account, and would have thought very hard of it, if we had delayed, even for a day, the information of my arrival. Besides, she has some important business to attend to."

"Business?"

"That concerns you and me."

"I understand," whispered the girl, blushing, "her consent?"

"Yes, Mary; and to-morrow I shall go over myself, personally to entreat her for it."

"Oh, Conrad, if the war with the Danes should break out again?"

"Let it break out," said the young man, vehemently, "I move no hand, but stay with my Mary and attend to the farm."

"But if they compel you?"

"They will not compel me, my dear, for ere the leaves fall from the trees I am your husband, and when I show that the management of the farm depends entirely upon me, nobody can compel me to take part in this contemptible war."

"You looked much better, too, after you threw off the soldiers' uniform and had your ordinary clothing on again."

"And how will I look," replied Conrad, "when the bridegroom's red riband flutters on my hat?"

"This we shall soon see," exclaimed Mary, as she took the hat from the head of the young man.

"What do you want with the hat?"

"Look, Conrad!"

With a light movement of the hand, Mary took

a red riband from her black bodice, which had formed a large loop upon her breast, and wound it around the hat, as she held the latter upon her knees.

"Thus," she pleasantly exclaimed, and again placed the hat upon his head, "thus, pretty much, looks the hat of a bridegroom—it is a pity that the riband has not a larger loop."

"Mary," cried the enraptured Conrad, "this riband I will never return to you."

"Well, then keep it, dearest; its red color is a symbol of my love for you!"

"And this kiss may tell you that my love is greater than yours!"

"This is not so!"

"Oh, yes!"

"Oh, no!"

Conrad locked the girl in his arms, and settled the little quarrel by a glowing kiss. The happy pair were not sensible of the listener at the window. The moon had now come forth.

Suddenly footsteps were heard in the forest.

"Do you hear!" exclaimed Mary, "Rosa is coming. I will scold her for making us wait so long."

And like a chamois she ran over the grass-plot toward the forest path, whence the steps were heard. But she had scarcely entered the thicket, when the form of a man stood before her. With a shriek she started back, and ran toward Conrad, who had hastened after her.

"What is the matter?" he cried.

"Look at that figure—it comes nearer! Let us fly, it may be a robber!"

"Fly! I?" exclaimed Conrad, and advanced toward the man, who had now reached the grass-plot.

"Conrad," said the stranger, "is it you?"

"What, count, and alone in the forest?"

"I was in search of you. I must speak to you."

"To me?" asked Conrad, in astonishment.

"I have come for that purpose. But who is that lady?"

"It is Mary, my bride. Ah! how she will rejoice when she sees you again—I will call her."

"Not if you love me. I must not be known, even by Mary."

"For heaven's sake, dear count, what ails you? You are so agitated—your face is pale—what has occurred?"

"You shall know all, but first send Mary inside a while."

Without replying a word Conrad hurried to his bride, who stood trembling at the door of the tavern.

"Mary," he said, softly, "go into old Caspar

for a few moments, I will soon return, and then we shall go on home."

"Who is the stranger?" anxiously asked the trembling girl.

"I cannot tell you now; but fear nothing; the conference which he requests of me can be only to our advantage—come into the house."

Conrad took Mary's arm, and gently drew her along with him, attempting to allay her fears by a few pleasant words. After he had assigned her to the care of old Caspar, he returned to the count.

The count had taken a seat on the bench under the window, his head buried in his hands.

But in the meantime, and while the count and Conrad had been talking, Graff had taken Conrad's hat with the red riband from the bench, reaching out of the window for that purpose. Then he roused his companion.

"Eberhard," he softly exclaimed, "awake!"

"What is the matter?" groaned the half drunken man.

"Look at this hat!"

"Why at the hat?" he said, rubbing his eyes.

"The riband around it is from Mary, the heiress, Mary, I say."

"To whom does it belong?"

"To Conrad, your rival; but he still; some one is approaching the bench before the house."

At this moment, and whilst Eberhard angrily trampled the hat under his feet, the count drew nigh, and sat down upon the bench. In another moment Conrad appeared. Neither suspected the listening hunters.

"Dear count," began Conrad, "why do you trouble yourself to come to me, instead of sending for me to come to the castle?"

"Conrad," said the count, deeply moved, as he grasped the hands of the former, "you are happy, very happy, because you can marry the girl you love."

"Yes, dear count," whispered the young man, joyfully, "ere autumn, Mary will be my wife. In the course of this week I had intended to ask for your consent, and you would not have refused it?"

"Did I not tell you, friend Conrad, when we lay at the watch-fire, two weeks ago, and spoke about home, that we should go before the altar on the same day?"

"Oh, I remember it—the other day we stood at the outposts——"

"Where I would have been out down by the insidious Danes," the count quickly added, "if you had not rescued me at the risk of your own life."

"I had not intended to say that, dear count—

what I have done, any one would have done for his major."

"Conrad," exclaimed the count, in a tone of despair, "Conrad, I wish the Danish bayonets had pierced me, that I would never again have seen these mountains!"

"My God, what has happened? You had intended to tell me——"

"Hear me," said the count, with a sigh, and judge for yourself whether my wish is a just one: they have robbed me of my Emma!"

"How?" exclaimed Conrad, "the young countess, of whom you spoke with so much affection?"

"And whom I had intended to lead to the altar on my return. During my absence they have disposed of her hand: the family have concluded that she must marry the old Baron von H——."

"Incredible!" exclaimed Conrad.

"And nevertheless true!" sighed the count.

"The baron is at least twice as old as you, dear count. The young Countess Emma cannot love the old man!"

"She loves only one, I know it; but her family desire it; and the poor girl must obey. I am told that in a few days the betrothment is to take place."

"In a few days?"

"The whole is the work of the baron, therefore I have written to him, and sent him a challenge."

"Dear count, what have you done?"

"What my honor requires! This evening, at nine o'clock, the duel will take place, at the ruins near the abbey."

Graff, who had attentively listened at the window, whispered to his colleague,

"The place is well selected, for it is peculiarly calculated to break one's neck."

"But have you considered everything?" objected Conrad, who doubted the abilities of the count; "did you consider that even your letter is sufficient to impeach and convict you?"

"I defy everything," replied the young count, sullenly, "as the thought of the future brings me to despair."

"And suppose that the baron does not appear, and accuses you of having threatened his life?"

"He will come, for he has courage."

"And undoubtedly coolness too, whilst you are in the greatest agitation. Oh, my God, if he should kill you!"

"No, no, fear nothing; I can depend upon my arm."

"And if you kill or wound the baron?"

"In this case, which I almost take as granted, I count upon you. Listen," continued the count,

hastily, "you know the residence of my friend, the upper forester G——?"

"I know it, a half an hour's journey beyond the village, at the edge of the forest——"

"Thither go, after you have accompanied your Mary home. You will tell the upper forester of my duel, and ask him for his horses and his carriage. Then drive to the crossway below this wood, and await me."

"How, dear count, shall I not stand at your side when you fight?"

"No, my letter says that I come alone, and besides this I have no one to whom I could entrust my flight. If I am once beyond the boundaries, I take a ship for America."

"But have you money for your journey?"

"I have arranged everything; in my girdle is a considerable sum in gold."

"And your splendid property, dear count, with the lucrative forests?"

"I do not own any more—it is all mortgaged. But now hasten," said the count, rising, "for it is eight o'clock, and I must not let him wait. Be punctual and silent."

"Oh, my God!" exclaimed Conrad, "is there nothing that will change your resolution?"

"Nothing in the world!" answered the count, firmly. "You tarry and consider—am I mistaken in you? Will you not do me this last service?"

"You desire it, dear count, and so be it! I shall be with the horses and carriage at the crossway. Heaven grant that I must not wait too long for you!"

"Conrad, can I depend upon your silence? Even Mary must not know it, as she is much attached to me."

"My word for it!"

"Farewell!"

The count wrapped his cloak around his shoulders, to conceal a pair of swords, and then disappeared in the woods. Conrad entered the tavern in great confusion, so that he did not think of his hat, which he had left upon the bench under the window.

After a few minutes the young man came out of the house again; he led Mary by the arm, who stormed him with questions about the stranger. But Conrad kept his word; he gave evasive answers, and said nothing about the name of the count, or his object. They soon reached the village. At the farm they parted: Mary with a sorrowing heart, although she knew the good character of her lover, and Conrad with a beating breast for the fate of the count—for he was thinking that he could not arrive soon enough at the crossway for his safety.

In the meantime Graff and Eberhard came out of the tavern. They wished old Caspar a loud good night, and disappeared in the forest. The old man locked the door of his little house.

III.

It was past nine o'clock when the deep silence of the village was interrupted by music and loud huzzas: the young boys and girls were congratulating the new town magistrate. They halted at his window, whilst the band of music played a dashing march. All who had not been attached to the procession, now made their appearance, partly to hear the music, and partly to listen to the speech of the magistrate.

Mary, who expected to meet Conrad here again, was likewise present; she walked up to a group of young girls, just as Valentine came proudly out of the house and stepped upon a large stone, which lay at the white-washed wall. His harangue, spoken loud and distinctly, was heard all around.

But the troubled bride heard but few of his words. Her thoughts busied themselves with Conrad and the mysterious stranger in the woods. Her searching glances went over the whole assemblage, but the face of him whom she loved was not there.

The speech was concluded, and the village musicians began a new march. Mary, whose anxiety increased every minute, withdrew unobserved, and was just about entering the door of her house, when the music suddenly ceased, and the mass pressed toward the spot whence the magistrate had made his speech. Greatly alarmed, she stood still and listened, for she felt as if she was to hear something adverse of Conrad. This presentiment seemed destined to be fulfilled. In the noise and confusion she distinctly heard the voice of Rosa, whom she had imagined to be still with her aunt in the neighboring village. With great effort she collected herself, and pressed through the dense crowd to the door of the magistrate.

Here stood Rosa, pale and breathless, before Valentine, and attempted to speak, but terror and exhaustion prevented her for a while.

"What is going on? what has occurred?" cried men and women, as all pressed still nearer.

"Rosa, Rosa," stammered Mary, as she supported the exhausted friend, "for God's sake, what brings you hither? Has any misfortune occurred?"

"Silence!" commanded the magistrate. "What brings you to me, my child?"

In a few minutes Conrad's sister had so far recovered that she could come to words.

"Longer than I had expected," she said, in broken sentences, "certain business detained me with my aunt—it was night when I passed the ruins of the abbey—when I suddenly heard footsteps—I was frightened—but I continued on my way—I walked around the bend of the fallen wall—when I saw in the moonshine how a man defended himself against two robbers—much terrified, I concealed myself behind a rock which stands by the way—I listened tremblingly—the noise of the combatants diminished—but the wind, which arose, brought me the hat of one of the murderers—I took it and ran toward the village—here is the hat!"

With a trembling hand she gave the hat, which she had until now concealed beneath her apron, to Mary, who stood next to her. Mary had no sooner beheld it, than she was stupified with horror, for she recognized the red riband which she had wound about Conrad's hat, as a testimonial of her love.

She stared upon the momentous, though mute witness, until the magistrate took it into his possession. Conrad's uncertain answers, and his singular behavior after his conversation with the stranger in the forest, rushed suddenly into her mind; and she doubted not, for a moment, but that the man whom she loved had taken part in the perpetrated crime, and that Rosa, his own sister, had betrayed him.

"Well, then, at the ruins near the abbey you have seen that a man was attacked by highwaymen?" asked the magistrate.

"Yes," replied Rosa, who had now recovered, "and that hat must belong to one of the murderers."

"Friends," cried Valentine, "there is no doubt but that a murder has been committed in the vicinity of our village, for this hat is moist with blood. Go to your houses, and fetch all the weapons you have—be here again in five minutes, we must search the whole forest—I, as magistrate, will take the lead."

The farmers scattered in all directions to obey the summons. The women and girls returned to their houses in terror. Everywhere through the village were heard low murmurs, and conjectures about the murderers.

Mary was the only one who suspected Conrad, for she alone had recognized his hat. But she concealed the suspicions in her bosom, though the pain she suffered for her lover almost broke her heart.

"Mary," inquired Rosa, as she grasped the arm of her friend, "where is my Brother Conrad?"

"I do not know!" stammered the poor girl.

"Was he not here?"

"I have not seen him in the crowd."

"You tremble, Mary; are you frightened more than I? Perhaps you fear——"

"Oh, no," replied Mary, quickly, "I fear nothing. Your narrative has filled me with terror and anxiety to such a degree that I am hardly able to speak—that is all."

"Be at ease," candidly replied the gay girl, "the criminals will soon be traced, and then they can do no more injury. I am glad that I found the whole village assembled, and that the magistrate can act immediately. See, there is one company of young men already, and there another. Oh, that they could take the villains!"

Whilst thus talking, they had arrived at Mary's door.

"Good night, Rosa," said the unhappy bride.

"Good night, Mary; and what shall I say to my brother?"

"I hope he may sleep better than I! Good night."

Mary entered her house and locked the door. When she was alone in her chamber, the long-suppressed tears broke forth: she sank upon a chair, and wept bitterly.

The first thunder-claps of the approaching storm were heard, and bright flashes lighted the room for a few moments at a time. Meanwhile upon the common before the magistrate's house more than fifty men, armed with guns, axes and poles, had assembled.

Just as the magistrate, armed with a long sword, came out of his house, the war-like multitude was augmented by two more—Graff and Eberhard, who inquired after the object of the meeting. Valentine gave a brief account of the occurrence.

"We accompany you, friends," exclaimed Graff. "The neighborhood must be freed of this rabble! Move on, to the abbey!"

When Valentine spoke about the hat, which one of the highwayman had lost, Eberhard had to support himself against his friend Graff, being scarcely able to stand up.

"Coward," whispered the hunter into his ear, "will you betray us? Collect yourself; the hat with the red riband will throw all suspicion upon Conrad, and you may yet get the farm, for Mary is too discreet to marry a convicted robber."

"You are right," replied Eberhard, "I follow you, uncle," he said, after the departing farmers, "I will only get my gun, which is in your house."

In a few minutes the hunters passed Mary's window.

A flash of lightning gave them an opportunity of seeing the pale face of the poor girl, who looked weeping toward the now solitary common.

"Have you seen her?" whispered Graff.

"She appears to wait for Conrad," replied the forester.

"I doubt whether he will come."

"And if he does come?" asked Eberhard, tremblingly.

"She will this evening have received him for the last time."

When the train had reached the forest, the storm broke out with such a fury, that the trees looked as if sheeted in fire, and the mountains re-echoed the thunder-claps, which followed each other in quick succession.

Mary sat at the window all night and wept.

IV.

A CLEAR morning succeeded to the tempestuous night. Field and forest sent a balsamic odor into the sea of light, which undulated in bright rays over the landscape. Mary, with pale face, and eyes red from weeping, left the room, and walked through the fragrant garden to a close arbor, which stood at the farthest end of the former. She sat down upon the wooden bench, and supported her burning head with her hand, fixing her eyes upon the pleasant church-steeple, the point of which appeared over a group of lindens beyond the garden-hedge.

Mary truly and sincerely loved the man of whose crime she had the clearest and most undeniable evidence. "What can have induced him to it?" she had asked herself a thousand times during the night. At times she attributed it to his poverty, his ambition to bring her some money—but then, again, she could not believe this, when she remembered that she herself possessed a good farm, on whose income her future husband could live. "No," she exclaimed, "love for me has not made him a criminal, he must have had some other reason. Had he truly loved me, he would have kept his honor pure and unspotted."

With a deep sigh she bowed her pale face upon her heaving breast, and fixed her wet eye upon the ground, which was strewed over with yellow gravel, where, the day before, Conrad had with a cane drawn a plan of the battle in which he saved the life of the young Count Rudolph.

With an involuntary shriek she held both hands before her eyes, as the thought arose within her: had he but died an honorable death! The poor girl still loved Conrad, though a criminal.

The report of footsteps aroused her from her meditations. She opened her eyes, and saw Rosa, who gaily hastened toward the arbor.

"She knows nothing about the crime of her brother," Mary whispered to herself; "if it

depends alone on me she will never find it out. Yes, yes, neither she nor anybody else in the whole world!"

"Good morning, Mary," cried Conrad's sister. "They said you went to the garden to see what damage the storm has done—and now I find you dreaming. What is the matter? Has a quarrel taken place between you and Conrad? Last evening I thought you looked cast down, to-day I see you really sorrowful; and my brother I miss, too!"

"Rosa," asked Mary, anxiously, "did you expect to find your brother here?"

"Certainly! Where else?"

"Have you not seen him this morning yet?"

"No, he was not at home last night?"

Mary, getting still paler, turned away; Rosa produced new proofs of Conrad's crime.

"Be not uneasy about this," continued Rosa, with sympathizing candor, "he informed us last night that we should not wait for him, as some important business kept him from home. This morning, I thought he would first come to you, for the bride is before the sister."

"I do not know where your brother is," replied Mary, concealing her emotion, "perhaps he is not as anxious to see me as you imagine."

"How!" exclaimed Rosa, indignantly, "you think my brother unfaithful? No, Mary, my brother has not fallen so low. Only be calm, he will and must come; I know him better, and do not mistrust him. Our town magistrate, too, is surprised, that he did not accompany him last night in pursuit of the highwaymen."

"Well, what have they discovered?" asked Mary, hastily.

"Nothing. At the place I designated they found many broken twigs and leaves, that is all. That a fight has occurred there is evident, but no traces of blood could be discovered; it was, in all probability, only a robbery."

"Is not that enough? A highway robbery is punished with death—and were it not, the disgrace itself were death."

"I think so too, Mary! The magistrate is determined to hang the perpetrator. This morning early he was with me, and troubled me with several questions. Among the rest, whether, in my terror, I might not have taken a bush for a robber? Mary, Mary!" she suddenly cried, as she pointed toward an elevation, close to the garden-hedge—"see there, was I not right?"

Both girls looked, Rosa with astonishment, and Mary with horror, for Conrad, with crossed arms and bowed head, was coming down the path which led to a small gate in the garden-hedge. Presently he was so near that Mary could see

that instead of a hat, he wore a cloth cap with a leather screen.

"It is Conrad," she said, tremblingly.

"I wonder what has happened to him?" asked Rosa. "He is generally so pleasant—and this morning——"

"Rosa, will you do me a favor?"

"With pleasure."

"I suspect your brother comes to this arbor—we will withdraw a little, and not disturb him in his meditations."

"I bet," replied, Rosa, laughingly, "you have had a quarrel——"

The girls had scarcely arrived at their hiding-place, when Conrad opened the garden-gate, slowly walked through the garden, and sat down in the half darkened arbor.

"Farther I cannot go," he muttered to himself. "Oh, my God! what a terrible night, and still no information—I have in vain waited with my carriage at the cross-road. And I have searched the ruins and the forest—nowhere a trace of my poor count; what may have become of him? Have they fought? Terrible uncertainty—and I dare communicate it to no one."

"Do you understand what he says to himself?" tremblingly inquired Mary.

"No."

"He sighs."

"Perhaps his conscience troubles him," said Conrad's sister, with a smile.

"His conscience?" exclaimed Mary, with terror.

"Listen, he talks again."

"And Mary," continued Conrad, so loud that the girls could distinctly understand him—"what will poor Mary think of my absence? Last evening already she was troubled, because I could give her no satisfactory answers to her questions."

Rosa could be silent no longer: she broke from the hand of her friend, and stood before the surprised Conrad.

"You want to know what Mary thinks of your absence?" she loudly cried.

"Rosa!"

"She thinks as I do: that it does not show well for a lover, who expects to marry before long, to be gone a whole night, and nobody to know where he is!"

At this moment the pale bride came forth, and silently but reproachfully looked at the young man.

"Mary," he exclaimed, "I was kept away the whole night contrary to my will—can you forgive me?"

"I shall forgive you, Conrad?" she sorrowfully replied. "Ask your conscience!"

"Rosa, Mary," said the young man, with confusion, "has he been seen in the village this morning?"

"Who?"

"Our young Count Rudolph."

"No. But what do you want with the count?" asked Rosa, with surprise.

"I want to see him, to speak to him, that I may at last escape from this terrible uncertainty!"

Mary covered her face with both hands, for she thought that he intended to confess all to the count, as his crime seemed to hang heavily upon his heart. Rosa's suspicion, too, was raised the more, the longer she looked at her brother; it must be something more than a lover's quarrel, she felt, that troubled him.

"Conrad," she anxiously exclaimed, "what has happened—you are quite alarmed?"

"A secret was confided to me, which gives me trouble——"

"A secret! May your bride and your sister not know this secret?"

"Ask me not, I pray you—for I cannot tell it."

"Oh! unhappy girl that I am!" sobbed Mary, and fell weeping upon the seat in the arbor.

"Mary, Mary!" cried Conrad, as he hastened to her, and attempted to console her. But she pushed him back, and continued to weep aloud.

"Oh, my God!" said Rosa, deeply moved, "the anguish will make her sick."

"Anguish? what anguish?"

"The robbery in the ruins at the abbey."

"Impossible!" exclaimed Conrad, and stared at his sister. "Rosa, is it already known?"

The young man had spoken these words with an anxiety that shook the very heart of Mary, for they completed the proof of his guilt.

"Conrad, Conrad," she asked, with a trembling voice, "do you know ought about the occurrence at the ruins?"

But without replying to this question, he grasped both hands of his sister, and exclaimed entreatingly,

"Rosa, if my happiness, my tranquillity, is dear to you, oh, tell me what you know—speak! speak!"

"What I have seen with my own eyes, that a terrible fight has taken place there, and one man lay upon the ground—I ran to the village and cried for help—they hastened to the abbey but found nothing."

"And all this you have yourself seen?"

"My God! yes. The man on the ground was in uniform, for his epaulette glittered in the moonshine."

"Be silent, girl," exclaimed Conrad, with terror, "for God's sake, not another word about it!"

"Why not?"

"Because the life of a man is involved!"

Mary again fell upon the seat. But her eye observed every movement of Conrad, her ear drank each of his words.

"Oh, my God!" muttered the young man to himself, "who may be the departed one? Is he dead or yet alive? And *where* is he? Oh, that I could meet his opponent!"

Like a madman, who is unconscious of his situation, poor Conrad rushed out of the arbor toward the garden-gate, through which he had entered. But before he arrived there, the town magistrate, Valentine, appeared, gasping for breath.

"Hold!" he commanded the fugitive, and placed himself in his way; "one moment."

"I cannot!" cried Conrad.

"You *must*," replied the town magistrate, warmly, "I *must* speak to you."

"You wish to speak? Speak, quick!"

"Only one word. Do you know this hat?" asked Valentine, as he brought the hat with the red riband out from beneath the skirts of his coat, and held it up to Conrad.

"Certainly! it is mine."

"How, what!" stammered the magistrate, "you, your hat?"

"Well, yes! The red riband that adorns it was bestowed to me by Mary—why do you ask? what about the hat?"

"And you confess that it belongs to you?"

"Oh, my God! I forgot my errand," cried Conrad, and made an attempt to go on.

"Stop!" cried the magistrate, and grasped the arm of the fugitive. But Conrad broke loose, and rushed through the garden-gate into the field.

The arbor was now filled by the loud weeping and sobbing of the two girls, which brought the confused Valentine again to his senses.

"Stop him, stop him!" he cried, "stop him."

"Where is my brother?" asked Rosa, as she came forth from the arbor.

"Away over the mountains. You must testify, children, to what he has himself confessed. Ah! my presentiments. To him, then, belongs the mysterious hat. Now I will satisfy the supreme counsellor that I am a born town magistrate. The police must saddle immediately, and pursue the fugitive."

"Gracious God!" cried Rosa, and ran after her brother, caring nothing more about those who remained behind.

"Farewell, Miss Mary," said the magistrate, scornfully. "You have a valiant lover!"

Mary could weep no more; but the pallor of death covered her lovely face, and from her eye streamed an unearthly brilliancy.

"Mr. Valentine," she said, with a firm tone of voice, "I must speak to you—stay."

"When I have taken the malefactor," replied the magistrate, and started to leave the garden.

"No, this instant."

"You are cunning, Miss, you will keep me here that Conrad can escape. But I am not caught so easily."

"You must stay," said Mary, firmly, and she forcibly drew the magistrate into the arbor."

"Girl, will you detain the agent of the government? It seems to me you know something about the knavery of your lover?"

These words brought the tears to the eyes of the poor girl. Weeping aloud, she fell upon her knees, and imploringly lifted up her hands.

"Mercy, mercy!" she exclaimed; "rob me not of the last hope which this terrible moment has created within me. I know nothing about the occurrence at the ruins!"

"Well, but what course do you intend to take?"

"I will save him from death!"

"Not with my assistance? I am town magistrate!"

"Listen to me."

"No, no, my position forbids it. I have no pity for a criminal."

"Then have compassion on your poor ward, whose father you promised to be."

"I shall resign the guardianship. I will have nothing to do with a girl who loves a malefactor."

"Oh, my God! do not talk about love at this terrible moment."

"My nephew, who loves you from his very heart, you have disdainfully rejected. Yes, yes," added the magistrate, ironically, "I believe it, honest Conrad deserves the preference in all respects! Girl, the shame which you have cast on him and me, will never vanish from my memory."

Suddenly Mary arose.

"Mr. Valentine," she said, with a forced smile, "you say your nephew, Eberhard, loves me?"

"So he told you himself on Saturday——"

"Listen to me. Up to this time, you are the only one, besides Rosa and myself, that knows the horrible secret of last night—observe eternal silence on the matter, and arrest all pursuit of the unfortunate Conrad, so that he may be enabled to leave the country—and I will publicly acknowledge that I love your nephew, and will give him my hand. Take my life—if Conrad is saved, I am ready to die!"

This proposition staggered the magistrate: not out of compassion to the pale and beautiful girl, not to gratify the inclinations of his nephew, but because his avaricious heart expected a profitable business. He grasped her hand, and led her to the seat.

"Mary," said he, "I rejoice for your sake, that you at length have come to a knowledge of yourself, and are ready to deny this villain, who, when yet a boy, betrayed his nature. That you may save your honor, and because I am your guardian, I will set justice aside, and agree to your proposition."

"You agree?" exclaimed Mary.

"Here is my hand. Since nothing was discovered at the place where the crime was committed, I think I shall be able to conceal the secret."

"May heaven reward you!" said the poor, weeping girl.

"But one condition I must insist on," continued the magistrate, after a pause, during which he had reviewed the well-cultivated and extensive garden, and the pleasant dwelling-house.

"What do you want yet?" whispered Mary.

"According to the new law, the civil marriage has been introduced into our country, and went in force a week ago—I desire that you to-day sign the marriage contract with my nephew, in the form I lay it before you."

"My life is in your hand," was the resigned answer, "I agree to anything, so that Conrad will be secure from dishonor."

"That he shall remain so, is as much my interest as yours. Now follow me to the house, dear ward; forget the past night."

Mary, exhausted almost to death, took his arm, and entered her little room, where she spent the forenoon in gloomy despair.

Valentine, who could scarcely await the time when his avarice was to be gratified, immediately consulted his nephew, Eberhard, who met him as he was about entering his house. The young rake acquainted his uncle with his large debt, and the latter promised to forward the amount to the city, as soon as the marriage contract was signed.

At three o'clock in the afternoon the contract was signed. Mary permitted herself to be led about like a child.

V.

WHILE the marriage contract was being signed at Mary's residence, Conrad arrived at the mansion of the Baron von H——. Of him, as the rival of the count, he expected to learn the latter's fate.

Though a servant he announced himself to the baron.

"You may come in," was the reply.

With a beating heart, Conrad opened the high folding-doors of a pavilion, which was shaded by lofty chesnuts, and entered a cool and roomy apartment. But he had scarcely thrown a glance into it, when he gave a shriek of joy; young Count Rudolph sat with the baron upon a sofa. Conrad's entrance seemed to have interrupted a confidential conversation between the two men.

"Conrad, Conrad!" exclaimed the count, and presented the friend to the baron as the preserver of his life.

"Baron," said Conrad, "I am not now under the necessity of requesting an audience of you—my errand concerns the count, about whose fate I was in ignorance."

"Stay, children, and speak what is necessary—business calls me to my secretary, who has been waiting for me all day in vain—stay, and ease your hearts."

With these words the old man left the apartment, after he had pleasantly given his hand to the young count.

"Oh, dear count," exclaimed Conrad, "I cannot express my joy in words—may I trust my eyes? You—at your rival's side? And none of you wounded——"

"Who knows whether I would have been yet alive," replied the count, smilingly, "if the baron had appeared at the ruins a few minutes later?"

"The baron?" cried Conrad, with surprise.

"No other! The bandits, whom I unfortunately could not recognize, are dangerous villains. After they had robbed me, they tried to kill me too. I defended myself with all my might, but the robbers threw me upon the ground, and would certainly have accomplished their object, had not the baron, with drawn sword, stepped between us as my deliverer."

"Long live the baron!" cried Conrad.

"And now imagine my surprise," continued the count, "as he smilingly gave me his hand, and said in a pleasant tone of voice, 'young blusterer! why have you concealed your love from me? Emma, who loves you with all her heart, had more confidence in me. Instead of fighting here, please accompany me to the castle, and pacify the bride, who is in great trouble on your account.'"

"Thank God! Long live the baron!"

"I was about falling at his feet, but he stretched out his arms, and pressed me to his bosom. Now, dear Conrad, I am the happiest of all men!"

"I believe it!" replied the young man. "But

I—while you were in the castle of your beautiful bride, I tarried at the crossways, as we had agreed, amid rain, thunder and lightning. I waited all night. When morning came, I ran through the ruins and the forest in despair—I inquired at your castle, but could nowhere find a trace of you. At last I concluded to ask your opponent about the result of the duel, and thank God, it turned out better than we either had reason to expect. But now I must hasten to pacify my poor Mary, who was very angry with me last evening, because I would give her no satisfactory answer about my conversation with the mysterious stranger in the forest. I suppose I can now, dear count," added Conrad, with a smile, "under the seal of silence, confide the secret to my bride, to clear myself from all possible suspicion?"

"Oh, no, dear Conrad," exclaimed the count, good-humoredly, "not you, it becomes me to appease your sweet-heart, and to beg her pardon for the trouble I have caused her."

"What?"

"Mary, my beautiful foster-sister, must expect a visit from me. I will publicly return to her the bridegroom, whom I so mysteriously enticed from her for a short time."

"Then I have no objection, dear count, for you will soon soften her anger. When may she expect you?"

"Expect me? We go together. I expect my carriage every moment—you ride at my side to the door of your bride."

"No, dear count——"

"I suffer no contradiction—my purpose remains unalterable."

Conrad would have made farther objections, but the count took him in his embrace, and in the true sense smothered every word in his mouth.

Dinner was past with the baron. But a table was spread for Conrad, in one of the side rooms. The young man had eaten nothing since the previous evening, and it may well be imagined that the invitation was not unwelcome.

Strengthened at body and heart, he had just finished when the carriage arrived. The count was still in the castle, bidding adieu to his bride and the baron.

"Conrad," exclaimed the coachman, who had participated in the campaign as groom to the count, "it is well that I meet you here."

"Why so?"

"Your sister was at the castle just as I was driving away. She was seeking you, because you said you would go to see the count. I told her that I was about to go and bring him, and

that he was at the mansion of the baron, when she replied, 'then my brother is there too.' She then gave me this letter for you."

Conrad recognized Mary's handwriting at first view. A dark presentiment arose in his breast, as his quivering hand broke the seal of the letter. Once more he drew breath, and then said, "there was only one remedy to save you, and God gave me strength to apply it; it is the greatest, the last sacrifice of my love for you! For this I request a sacrifice in return—flee, after you have read my lines, this neighborhood, and never, never return."

The poor young man could scarcely trust his senses; the contents of the letter were to him as mysterious as they were terrible. With his face unearthly pale, he once more read it. As if struck by lightning, he stood and stared at the momentous paper.

In this state he was found by the count, who pleasantly came down the steps, and hastened toward the carriage.

"Well, Conrad," he exclaimed, after he had entered the carriage, "come sit by my side."

Mechanically he complied with the invitation.

"What do you hold in your hand?" asked the count, astonished at Conrad's appearance.

Conrad handed him the letter without speaking a word.

"Singular," said the count, after he had read the letter, and compassionately looked into the gloomy eye of his preserver. "Are you fully satisfied that Mary wrote these lines?"

"Yes."

"She has resorted to some stratagem to punish you for remaining away so long."

"The mysteriousness and earnestness of the letter scarcely admit of such an interpretation. And I remember, too, the singular behavior of my bride, when I saw her at the arbor this morning; and when, on hearing of the attack upon your person, I immediately withdrew."

"Then the people know of it?"

"Rosa, who returned from my aunt, is said to have seen the conflict."

"There is a misunderstanding at the bottom, which we will soon bring to daylight. Peter," cried the count to the coachman, "drive at full gallop. In half an hour we must be at the village. Stop at Mary's farm, and not at the castle."

Peter gave his whip to the fiery horses. The two young men did not speak a word—each one was left to his own meditations. A half an hour had scarcely elapsed—though it appeared to Conrad like an eternity—when the carriage reached the first houses of the village. A few minutes more, and the foaming horses stopped

before Mary's house. The count addressed an encouraging word to Conrad, and then they entered.

"Heavens!" cried Mary, who sat pale and weeping in her chair, and did not seem to have noticed the arrival of the carriage; "unfortunate man! What do you want here? Did you not receive my letter?"

"Dear count," stammered Conrad, "you see that it is terrible truth!"

"Mary," said the count, seriously, "what means this?"

"Fly this neighborhood!" cried the girl, with a heaving breast, "away, away, ere destruction reaches you!"

"Are you mad?" cried the count. "Explain your singular conduct."

It was not till now that Mary recognized the count; she looked at him for a moment with staring eyes; then she sank weeping into the chair, and covered her face with her apron.

Conrad stood in the middle of the room, and, as if he had really committed a crime, held his trembling hands before his eyes, from which rolled a stream of tears. The count had walked up to Mary, and tried to get her to speak.

"Conrad," she at length exclaimed, and pointed toward the door, "fly, fly, before the magistrate returns."

"My God," said the count, "why should Conrad fear the magistrate?"

"Why? Shall I repeat the terrible narrative?"

Suddenly the young man lifted up his head; pride strengthened his nerves, and dissipated for a moment the pangs of his love. "Mary," he firmly said, "you desire that I leave your house, that the magistrate may not find me here—my honor as a soldier demands that I yield not a step until I get an explanation. What have you against me?"

"Conrad, will you still deceive me?" exclaimed Mary, vehemently.

"Mary, I demand, by your honor and by mine, that you, in the presence of the count, explain with what you charge me!"

"Where were you last night?" she asked, as she turned away her eyes, and with an anxious and beating heart awaited a reply.

"I was with the friend of the count, the upper forester of G——."

"And on business for me," continued the count, "which I could entrust only to my friend, and the preserver of my life."

Mary lifted up her head and looked at the two men, as if the words of the count had bereft her of her reason; the gloomy eye seemed to be

ready to start from its socket, and the bosom heaved vehemently.

"Listen," said the count, affectionately, "banish your trouble and your jealousy, for Conrad loves you with all the power of his heart. If he committed a mistake, I will bear the blame; for I am the man that sought him last evening, to request a favor that kept him all night from the village. I exacted his promise to observe profound silence even toward you. I assure you, on my word of honor, that he was engaged in my behalf."

With a piercing shriek, poor Mary fell senseless to the floor. Conrad hastened to the spot, and with both arms embraced her, as if he would impart new vitality into her system.

"My God!" exclaimed the count, "what has occurred here? Has jealousy robbed the poor girl of her reason?"

At this moment the door was opened, and the town magistrate, followed by his nephew, Eberhard, entered the room. A solemn pause of surprise and terror reigned for a moment in the apartment. Mary still lay lifeless in Conrad's arms.

"What do I see?" at length exclaimed Valentine. "This man still here? And you, count," he added, with a bow, "do you not know——"

"Villain!" cried Eberhard, "you still venture to enter this house? Be gone, ere justice stretches out her hand for you."

Conrad was scarcely conscious of himself.

"Ho, scoundrel," he cried, "it is you that has set his foot in this house, during my short absence! Now I can explain to myself——"

"Away," commanded Eberhard, "Mary is my wife!"

"Your wife?"

"The marriage contract is signed and lawfully recorded—away, I am master of this house!"

Softly, as if all his strength was failing him, Conrad laid the senseless maiden down by the chair, and supported himself by clinging to the table.

"Count," whispered the town magistrate, "here is the marriage contract. You know the civil marriage——"

The count pushed the paper away with his hand. Then he walked up to Mary, who now began to show signs of returning life. It could distinctly be seen that the firmness of her mind strove to overcome the weakness of the body.

"Mary," he said, earnestly, "it appears that you have become the victim of a vile conspiracy—but in the name of that God who punishes dishonesty, I request you to explain this terrible confusion!"

Mary's eyes sought poor Conrad, who stood at

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the table, a statue of sorrow and despair. She arose, not without great emotion, and walked to him with trembling steps.

"Conrad," she whispered, "what I have done, was done out of love for you—you know how I love you! And never, never shall I forget you—yet shun this place. You have seen me happy in my love for you—my wretchedness in my despair you shall not see—for I am the wife of the Forester Eberhard!"

"Conrad," said the count, resolutely, "you have lost your bride, but gained a friend, who will, with everything at his command, provide for your welfare. And if you love your friend, follow him; on his arm you shall leave the place of your misfortune; to his castle you shall go: and on it you can look as your home until I shall have succeeded in unmasking this mean conspiracy! Follow me!"

With these words he stepped to Conrad, and with deep emotion held the unhappy man to his breast. Then he took his arm for the purpose of leaving the room.

"Conrad, Conrad!" cried Mary, despairingly, as she stretched her hands after him.

The young man cast back another glance, and then silently followed the count.

The next minute the rattling of the carriage was heard that conveyed the two friends to the castle.

"Mr. Valentine," said Mary, with a firm voice, as she collected all her energy, "according to law, I am the wife of your nephew."

"No man can say anything against it," replied the magistrate; "you have given your word to my Eberhard, and the law has confirmed it."

"The law," continued Mary, "but not the church."

"This matters not; if the law has been complied with, then it is all right, according to our enlightened ideas."

"But not according to mine. Therefore hear my desire."

"Well, what do you wish?" asked the magistrate, ironically.

"I desire," said Mary, with dignity, "that you look upon me as unmarried, until the priest has consecrated the legal marriage. So long will I remain in the entire possession of my rights and property."

"And when shall the priest finish the business?" inquired Eberhard.

"When I am ready for it—perhaps next Sunday."

"Mary," said the hunter, gallantly, "this postponement is, it is true, a misfortune to my heart, but I assent."

"You understand, that till then solitude is desirable to me——"

"This means, in other words," said the magistrate, angrily, "that we shall take leave. Well we shall go. To-day, it is Monday—five days remain to prepare——"

"Make no preparations, Mr. Valentine."

"But you will certainly remove to the house of my nephew, which is charmingly situated at the edge of the forest."

"I shall do what becomes my duty as a wife."

Mary saluted the men, and went into her bed-chamber, the door of which opened into her room.

Uncle and nephew left the house, and on the way imparted to one another their apprehensions as to Mary's intentions.

"The contract is legally concluded," said the magistrate; "if your wife does not comply with the obligations agreed upon, then the law will compel her to it."

Night again found Eberhard and Graff together in the tavern, where they emptied one bottle after another, for the complete success of their plans.

V I.

WHILST Mary wept in solitude in her chamber separated from all the world, Conrad occupied a room in the castle of the count. Rosa, who attended to her brother's rural affairs during his absence, visited him every day, and reported what was said in the village about the occurrence.

"Oh, my God!" he exclaimed, "had Mary deceived me in the most shameful manner in the world, I could comfort myself, and treat her with the contempt she would deserve in that case. But as it is, she has become a sacrifice to her love for me, and I have lost a faithful heart."

The count, who was deeply affected by Conrad's misfortune, in vain exerted himself to persuade him to apply for a legal investigation, and to have the marriage contract annulled; he always expressed himself decidedly against it, as he was not inclined to involve Mary in an investigation. But he confidentially expected that Mary herself would take some steps to regain her liberty, and with this hope, which every day grew stronger, he lived at the castle inactive like a hermit. But when he heard of Rosa, that next Sunday the marriage ceremony was to be performed at church, the last ray of hope departed; he informed the count that he would emigrate to America.

Although the count suspected a premeditated case of villainy, from the circumstance that Conrad's hat was found in the ruins, he yet abstained from a legal investigation, in compliance with

Conrad's urgent request, especially since every trace of the perpetrator was wanting. Yet he had secretly given notice of the attack on his person to the judiciary, and applied for a strict watch on the neighborhood.

The same Sunday on which Valentine expected the marriage ceremony between his nephew and Mary to be performed, was also determined on by the baron for the union of his ward, Emma, with the young count; and preparations to this end were eagerly prosecuted. This gave the count repeated opportunities to visit the mansion of the baron, and leave his friend Conrad to himself, who intended to quit the country next day. He feared the count's attempts to persuade him to stay, and had, therefore, taken a firm resolution to set out on his journey secretly.

Thursday was approaching its close, and night lay upon the earth, when Conrad left the castle and slowly walked toward the village. He intended to bid farewell to his sister. Careless about the way he was taking, he suddenly stood still to see where he was—he stood at Mary's garden-gate, close to which was situated the arbor, where, in the preceding spring, when about proceeding to the war, he bade farewell to her. He involuntarily approached the hedge, and looked thoughtfully through the foliage, which was now and then gently moved by the evening breeze.

Suddenly he thought he heard footsteps—he redoubled his attention—he had not deceived himself—the footsteps came nearer, and at length softly crackled upon the sand in the arbor.

"Oh, my God!" thought Conrad, "if it were Mary!"

It required some exertion, as this thought arose, to conceal his emotion. Breathless, he stood still, and stared into the dark arbor, from which he was separated only by the foliage of the hedge. He was still unresolved whether he would go or remain, when a loud weeping struck upon his ear. He recognized Mary's voice. Tears came to the eyes of the young man, and the self-collection he had just acquired, was again dispersed.

"My strength is failing," Conrad heard Mary say to herself, "I cannot become the forester's wife—and Conrad avoids me—he is doing nothing for me—he gives me over to sorrow and despair. Oh, my God, my God!"

"Mary, Mary!" cried Conrad, involuntarily.

"Heavens!" exclaimed the voice in the arbor, "who calls my name?"

"Mary, only one word before I part from you."

"Conrad, you come to me, to the girl whom

you should despise, for she thought you capable of committing a crime?"

As if urged on by some invisible power, the young man threw open the garden-gate, and rushed into the arbor, where Mary lay weeping upon the ground.

"Conrad," she exclaimed, as he entered, "I am a miserable, unhappy being! Can you forgive me? Will you hate me?"

"No, no, I pity you, and still love you with all the strength of my heart."

Gently he lifted the trembling girl from the ground, and imprinted a warm kiss upon her glowing forehead.

"Mary, your fate grieves me more than my own, for you have to forget the friend of your youth, and the love which you fondly anticipated would make you happy in life, will now cause you the bitterest sorrow."

"Conrad, Conrad!"

"See," continued Conrad, as he wound his arm about her neck, "I am happier than you, for my heart is free, it can remain true to you and love you. I am bound by no other tie. I can die with your name upon my lips—therefore weep not for me—I am less to be pitied than you!"

Mary clung with trembling arms to Conrad, and spasmodically embraced him for a few minutes.

"Now collect yourself," said Conrad, "I depart, that I may not render the fulfilment of your duties the more difficult."

"Oh, my God! let me die; life makes me miserable!"

"Come, Mary, to your house, before we are discovered by the eye of a spy. I accompany you to the threshold, then farewell!"

Slowly the two walked through the star-lit garden. Arrived at the door of the house, Conrad silently pressed the last kiss upon Mary's lips, disengaged himself from her arms, and rushed away, he looked not where, into the darkness of night.

He had strayed through brushes and fields for perhaps a quarter of an hour, when he suddenly reached the banks of a large pond—that which drove Philip's mill. With a gloomy smile he stood still, and looked upon the tranquil water. The evening was calm, and all nature quiet; not a sound struck upon the ear, save the distant and monotonous rattling of the mill, whose lighted window glittered like a star.

"No," he at length whispered to himself, "I will not here destroy my life; Mary shall not reproach herself with my death; she is already unhappy enough. War rages everywhere—let it take me as its sacrifice."

He quickly turned his back, and hastened

toward a wood, whose outlines appeared in the distance, Conrad soon found himself at a living hedge, which surrounded a pleasant-looking hunter's house. From one window on the ground floor, which was half covered by the leaves and branches of the hedge, flickered a light.

"Heavens!" whispered Conrad, with surprise, "is not this the house of the Forester Eberhard, the husband of my unfortunate Mary? Was it accident that brought me here, or was I guided by the hand of destiny? Ha," he exclaimed, and threateningly shook his clenched fist toward the window, "you are the Evil One, that has made two beings unhappy; you caused Mary to weep, and me to stray through the world in despair! God of Heaven! hast thou brought me hither, that I should break Mary's fetters, oh, then give me one sign, and make me the instrument of thy Providence!"

A loud knock at the door of the house, which was on the opposite side, answered the wild interrogation of the young man. He stood still and listened.

"Who knocks?" inquired Eberhard's voice within.

"I, Graff," was replied at the door.

"Whosoever it is, I do not open the door at this hour of night."

"Eberhard, open the door."

"Come to-morrow again."

"Open, I must speak to you for your own interest."

They were silent. Soon Conrad heard the door open, and the sound of footsteps in the house. Urged on by the presentiment that some decisive secret of great importance to himself would be discovered, he softly bent the branches and leaves apart, and thrust his head through a breach in the hedge, so that he was enabled, through the window, to look over the entire room. He had scarcely assumed this position, when he saw Eberhard and Graff come in through the door. Eberhard wore a plain coat, and Graff was armed with gun and cutlass.

Conrad now distinctly heard the following conversation.

"Well," said Graff, as he entered, "you have become so haughty in your happiness, that you let a friend and colleague wait before the door, as if he were your lackey. I had reason to expect that, when I come, every door should be thrown open."

"What do you want? What brings you to me?" asked the other, with vexation.

"Our security, and still more, a good job."

"A good job? What does that mean?"

"I suppose you are aware that young Count

Rudolph is engaged to marry Emma von Linden, and that the bride brings a considerable fortune to the bridegroom?"

"Well?" said Eberhard, inquiringly.

"Well, my colleague, I was informed, this afternoon, that the count will to-night leave the castle of the Baron von H—, and carry twenty thousand dollars in gold with him. This little sum is to beat the way of the bride to the house of her husband, who intends to catch a few bills of exchange with it before he will get married, so that *he* may not be caught."

"What do I care about this?" said Eberhard, indifferently.

"Toward midnight he will return home by himself—his road leads along the stone-quarries——"

"Heavens!" cried the forester, "perhaps you again think——"

"Ah! you understand me at last?" exclaimed Graff, with a hoarse chuckle. "Would it not be a great pity if this nice sum should be buried with him in the stone-quarries? The job is of double utility: we get rid of a dangerous man, who cannot forget the trick at the abbey, and we will get rich at once. It is true, you are provided for already, for you will marry a neat girl, with just as neat a farm—but I dare not think of getting married, and must study out some other means for gaining a fortune—and behold, my sagacity has succeeded. You are my friend, Eberhard, you shall get the third part of this job; for more you do not need in order to pass for a wealthy man."

The blood began to chill in the veins of the listener at the window; and his senses seemed to him to be veiled in a dream. With all the strength he could command, he maintained his position, in order to hear the conclusion of the conversation, for so much was clear to him, in spite of his confusion, that a mere accusation without proof, would be not only useless, but even injurious to himself. The thought, that the civil marriage had chained Mary to a highwayman, gave him strength to hold out.

"I will not obey you," he heard Eberhard say; "you once before led me, to the commission of a crime; but it shall never be so again!"

"By heavens!" exclaimed Graff, "this marriage seems to have made your conscience very tender!"

"Not the marriage, but the stolen money. There it lies, in my closet—I cannot touch it! Could I purchase my tranquillity again by returning it, I could part with it without grief. Oh, that I had not yielded to your tempting. Fly, for you have poisoned my life!"

"How rationally you talk!" said the other, with a sneer. "You now despise the money, because you have married a rich girl—but how would it stand with you, my valiant friend, if the thought had not occurred to me, that by leaving the hat at the ruins, suspicion would fall on Mary's bridegroom. In consequence of that she bade him farewell, and married you out of terror. Do you believe that Mary would have given up Conrad otherwise? If my sagacity had not woven the net, you would certainly not have caught the bird. But for me you would set in the debtor's prison, and see through the gratings of your window how other people enjoy life."

"Leave me, Graff, I will henceforth live as a respectable man."

"Ha, ha, ha!" laughed the hunter, "do you believe that one can quit at pleasure, when he has once commenced? That would be convenient! No, my fellow, I need you, and you must accompany me, or——"

"Or?" repeated Eberhard.

"Or I will show you," said the hunter, in a threatening tone of voice, "that you owe me obedience."

"Man," cried the forester, "let me alone."

"When you have done your duty toward me."

"Then take the money out of the closet, and depart."

"How, you will buy your friend with money?"

"You are not my friend—I am ashamed of you."

"Not your friend? What am I, then?" asked Graff, in a rage.

"You are my demon!"

"But yet your good demon!"

"Leave my house," cried Eberhard, who was brought to the verge of desperation by the irony of the hunter.

"Mark my words," said Graff, sternly. "If you are not at the tavern of old Caspar at precisely eleven o'clock, to accompany me, I will to-morrow morning go to Mary, and tell her all—do you hear?"

"Almighty God! you will do that? Graff, take that money out of the closet, not a dollar is wanting—take it, but let me alone! Go, go."

"Without you I go not a step!"

"Consider that we shall lay the burden of a fresh crime on our souls!"

"One or two—it is all the same!" laughed the hunter, "are you afraid to be a wise man?"

"You still laugh?" asked Eberhard, with horror.

"Yes, I laugh, friend, to show you my contempt. Once more, choose; will you come to the *rendezvous*, or shall I go to—you know whither?"

"Man, are you serious?"

"By my hunter's honor, which I never violate!"

"Once more, Graff——"

"Not a word—yes or no?"

After a pause, the two hunters, Eberhard and Graff, stood opposite to each other in the room; Conrad at the window, scarcely ventured to breathe, although an unutterable anguish seemed ready to burst his breast.

"Well, I come," said Eberhard, at length, "but only upon one condition."

"Name it."

"That no blood be shed."

"Fool, half a work is none! Suppose, for an instant, that the count should recognize us? You see, I wish to promote your profit. I clear out as soon as I have the money; this you cannot do, you must remain with your wife—it is all the same to me whether the count escape with a sound skin or no: you, however, the one that remains here, ought to see that the witnesses be put aside; therefore be wise and obey me!"

"Oh, horrible, horrible! I shall load a murder upon my conscience!"

"No, that you shall not, the accidental measures belong to me—you only take the money! At precisely eleven o'clock, then, at the tavern—at the bench where we took that hat so pregnant with fate. Farewell, comrade!"

Conrad now cautiously withdrew from the hedge, sent a look of gratitude toward heaven, and then fled with such a speed, that in ten minutes he stood before Philip's mill, gasping for breath. He met the young miller on the seat under the linden, where he was talking to a small circle of friends, how Conrad had saved the count's life.

"Welcome, Conrad!" they all cried, as soon as they recognized him. They then cheerfully surrounded the young man, for they knew his hard and undeserved fate, and pitied him from their hearts.

"Philip," whispered the one just arrived, "I must speak to you alone!"

"My God, Conrad, you are breathless! What has happened?"

"Nothing as yet, but come to your house for a moment."

The two young men disappeared in the mill. Those that remained behind under the linden, loudly expressed their fears, that the loss of Mary had bereft Conrad of his reason.

The clock in the village struck ten, and the little circle of neighbors was about to disperse, when Conrad and Philip came hastily out of the

mill. The latter wore the uniform of his regiment, an old sword at his side, and his rifle on his shoulder.

"Whither are you going?" cried the people, in astonishment.

"To the appeal!" was the reply of the men, and the next instant they disappeared in the darkness.

At a certain place in the village they parted again, Conrad to put on his uniform and his arms, Philip to call upon the third companion.

Rosa received her brother with a loud exclamation of joy. The latter scarcely saluted her, and rushed to his chamber. His sister followed him.

"Conrad," cried Rosa, whose joy had changed to terror, "you do not mean to go to the wars again, or why do you bring out your uniform?"

"To the war," was the quick and cheerful reply, "to the war, to conquer my Mary again!"

Rosa broke out in loud sobs, for she believed him deranged.

"Brother, I shall not permit you to leave this!"

"Why not?" asked Conrad, smilingly, as he put on the soldier's coat.

"How you are excited—you are sick!"

"You are mistaken, sister, I have never been so well."

"But whither are you going?"

"To the war!"

"Conrad, Conrad! what shall I make of this? This answer—your fiery eyes!"

The young man, in the meantime, examined the contents of a sportsman's bag. When he found the necessary ammunition in it, he threw it over his shoulder, took his gun, which hung at the wall, and then calmly and pleasantly walked up to his sister.

"Rosa," he mildly said, "you weep, and perhaps doubt my reason, because I speak of things that appear strange to you; but trouble yourself not, the march I expect to make will save the life of our young count, and restore honor to me and liberty to Mary. Can you now understand my sudden change, dear sister?"

"But tell me——"

"If I will not miss my object, I must hasten—soon I shall return, and you shall know all about it."

"Will you go alone?" asked Rosa, with anxiety.

"Come back to the room, and you shall see who accompanies me."

Just as brother and sister came out of the chamber, the door which led to the entry was opened, and Philip and another man in uniform and with arms, appeared at the threshold.

"Welcome, Christian!" cried Conrad, as he held out his hand to both. "You see," he turned to Rosa, "here are my companions. Are you still afraid? Now keep awake until we return, and provide for a good breakfast; for our work will not be finished before midnight. But say not a word about our march, or all is lost."

"And Mary shall be free?" asked Rosa, once more.

"Free," replied Conrad, "to become my wife. Adieu, Rosa!"

Cautiously the three men left the house and the village. Rosa went to the kitchen, stirred up a fire, and began to prepare the meal that was ordered.

VII.

THE hunter Graff had spoken the truth: Count Rudolph really took his carriage in the courtyard of the baron, toward midnight, to return to his castle. But he did not carry the sum of gold for which Graff longed; it was only a report that originated with the domestics, and was whispered into the ears of the savage woodman by one of the baron's hunters, at the tavern. The young count, although made happy by the love of a rich and beautiful girl, was not in the best humor. Conrad's misfortune, for which he had unintentionally laid the foundation, went deep to his heart, and gave him so much the more uneasiness because he was unable to make reparation for what had occurred. He had related the unfortunate incident to his bride, and, amid tears, she made the proposition to him, to assign to Conrad a small estate she possessed in the vicinity of B——, and which was husbanded by a tenant. Rudolph cheerfully agreed to this proposition, but that, with the presentation of the property, he could not also return the tranquillity of heart of the valiant man, restricted the joy which the turn in his circumstances would otherwise have given him.

The watchmen of the neighboring village had announced the hour of midnight, and their horns resounded through the quiet night, when the count perceived the white openings of the stone quarries, along which led a short part of his road. The passage of this road was entirely devoid of danger, as the openings were at a distance of more than a hundred paces, and could be distinguished, even in the greatest darkness, by the white glimmer of the stony-mass. Behind the quarries, on either side, ran pretty high mountain ridges, which formed a long and narrow valley, that made a turn toward the east; but the road to the castle parted at this turn toward the south, and, through a deep and narrow pass, again struck upon the plain.

Peter, the coachman, well acquainted with the road, whipped the horses lustily, so that the light and open carriage darted through the valley like an arrow. When he came to the place where he was to turn into the pass, he drove a little slower; but he had scarcely arrived at the narrow road, when a shot fell from behind a hazel-bush that stood at the declivity, and wounded the hand in which he held the whip. At the same time a man rushed to the rein of the horses.

The count, who had become somewhat cautious since the last attack upon him, snatched a pistol from the travelling-bag, and fired at the man who held the horses. The robber fell down with a loud cry, when the hoofs of the frightened animals crushed his body immediately. Peter retained so much presence of mind, that he grasped the lines with the sound hand, and prevented the horses from running off.

The count still stood upright in the carriage, and held the pistol he had just discharged, in his hand, when he was attacked with a cutlass from behind—a second robber had mounted the carriage. Without speaking a word, the count defended himself with the butt of the pistol, and a combat began on the carriage which would certainly have terminated in favor of the stronger bandit, if a pair of powerful hands had not grasped the villain by the hair, and dragged him backward over the seat on the ground. Below stood two men, who received the enraged robber with the butt-ends of their guns.

"Dear count!" exclaimed Conrad's voice, at this instant, "are you hurt?"

"Heavens—who are you?"

The three men in their uniforms stepped forward, and the moon, which at this moment came forth from behind a cloud, threw her rays upon their countenances.

"Soldiers of your battalion!" they replied, and stretched their arms toward the count, to help him out of the carriage.

"Conrad, Philip, Christian!" cried the count; and he embraced one after another.

"Well," cried Peter, "will you not assist me? I am wounded in the arm!"

Quickly Christian ran to the horses, and Conrad and Philip took care of the coachman.

"Where are you wounded?" said the count, sympathizingly.

"In the right arm; but it appears to be only a grazing shot, as I feel no pain."

Count Rudolph took out his handkerchief, and bandaged the arm of the coachman, who, fortunately, was only slightly grazed.

"Where are the robbers?" he then asked.

"Here is the most dangerous one?" exclaimed Conrad, and with Philip's assistance he dragged Graff forward. "It is the same who, once before, laid his hands on you at the ruins of the abbey; the same who stole my hat with the red riband, and left it at the place of his crime, to throw suspicion on me; the same who suspects there are twenty thousand dollars in your carriage, and wants to kill and plunder you, and then clear out as a rich man—is it not so, Mr. Graff? Now share with your companion, there he lies!"

"I wish I had shared with him!" muttered the robber.

"Who is the other?" inquired the count, as he walked up to the corpse.

"Look at him," said Philip, "he can still be recognized."

"Heavens! my own district forester! Oh, faithful Conrad, you have risked your life, your happiness for me! Over the corpse of this villain I return your Mary to you. God be praised, who has brought this about!"

"Dear count!" said Conrad, joyfully, "Mary still loves me, I may be happy again!"

"Just as you deserve to be, my brave, my good Conrad. Comrades," the count now addressed the soldiers, and joyful emotion made his voice tremble, "comrades, I invite you to my wedding, which will be celebrated next Sunday at the mansion of the baron—you will accompany me to church, and take the seat of honor at the festive table!"

"Count!" exclaimed Philip and Christian, with surprise.

"You must come, if you will not mar my pleasure."

"We are but farmers," said Philip, "we cannot appear in high company."

"Philip, where would I and my wedding be, if it had not been for you?"

"Dear count," said Conrad, "if you invite only my companions, what remains for me?"

"Friend," exclaimed the count, "is my mar-

riage day not also yours? Or shall Mary not become your wife?"

"Yes, she shall be my wife."

"Well, Conrad, we have suffered misfortune together, we shall also in one another's company celebrate the greatest day of our lives; and our companions are our common guests."

The young men threw the corpse of Eberhard upon the carriage, and then fastened the angry Graff to the hind axle-tree, so that he could move only his feet to walk. Peter again took his seat, and slowly drove toward the village. The count and the soldiers followed on foot.

A white cloud in the east announced the new day, just as the train arrived at the home of the village magistrate.

We shall pass over the grief of the Magistrate Valentine—grief, not for the death of his nephew, but for the money he had paid for him in town, and for the loss of the good meadow. We shall also pass over the happiness of Mary, when the count entered her room with the magistrate, and the latter returned the marriage contract, with the announcement that she was free, and was at liberty to give her hand to the man of her love. We shall only remark, that now, in the presence of the young count and the Magistrate Valentine, Mary and Conrad concluded a new contract, for time and eternity, and that next Sunday, in the village church, which was gorgeously decorated with flowers and wreaths for the occasion, two couples received the benediction of the priest—they were Count Rudolph and Emma, led on by their noble relatives, and Conrad and Mary, accompanied by Rosa, Philip and Christian.

Graff was given over to the hands of justice, and Eberhard to the mother earth in a corner of the grave-yard.

Eight days afterward, a travelling carriage stopped at Mary's farm: it was there for the purpose of conveying the young couple to the estate which the new countess had assigned to the preserver of her husband.

THE TOLLING BELL.

A SABBATH MORNING TALE.

BY J. T. TROWBRIDGE.

Nor many months ago, in one of my summer rambles, I found myself, on a beautiful Sabbath morning, the guest of a worthy and intelligent family, in a quiet country village.

The early breakfast was over; parents and children had joined in reading a chapter in the Bible; Mr. Sedgwick, the head of the family, had then offered up a fervent prayer, at the conclusion of which we all arose from our knees; when our ears were greeted by the clear, deep peals of the ringing church bell.

"So late!" exclaimed Mrs. Sedgwick, looking at the clock. "Our time must be slow."

"That is not the first bell for church," replied her husband. "There has been a death. The bell is going to toll."

A solemn silence ensued. Every countenance wore the expression of seriousness and awe. In country places, the occurrence of a death claims more thought and reflection than it can in populous towns. The destroyer puts his sickle into large cities, and reaps hundreds and thousands, all around us, without calling the mind a moment from the business and gaieties of life. It is only when some near and dear friend is cut down that we ever pause to think! But in small villages, where the vast tide of life comes not to drown meditation; where frequent visits of the dark angel occur not to breed a habit of indifference in the human breast; where every soul that hears the tolling bell, knows well for whom it tolls, and remembering him in the vigor of life, must think of him in coldness and darkness of death, and where even the sexton is impressed with seriousness; in such places, I say, the destroyer never comes, but every heart is taught a solemn lesson!

Observing the grave decorum of even the youngest children, inspired with awe by the sounds of the tolling bell, I could not resist the prevailing influence which weighed heavily upon my heart, although I was but a stranger in the place, and familiar though I was with the frequent visits of death.

During the intervals between the single, deep, monotonous peals, scarce a word was spoken by the family. The children whispered their sur-

mises, with regard to the person dead, as if it had been sinful to speak aloud. The parents seemed plunged in deep meditations.

At length the bell ceased tolling, and the age was struck. I counted twenty-three.

"It is Martin Lord!" said Mr. Sedgwick. "I thought it could be nobody else."

"Such then is his unhappy end," mused his wife. "Well, it will be wrong to mourn his death. If death was ever a merciful providence, it is so in this case."

"Is it a person who had been long sick?" I asked.

Instead of answering my question directly, Mr. Sedgwick said,

"There is a very singular history connected with that young man. It is now some time since the excitement, occasioned by this strange tragedy, died away; but the tolling of the bell, this morning, must bring it back forcibly to every heart. Perhaps you would be interested to hear the story?"

I expressed my desire to listen to the narration; upon which my friend gave me the details of the following story, which I relate with only a slight deviation from the original.

Martin Lord was once the flower and the hope of one of the most respected families in the village. His amiable disposition and superior intellect procured for him universal love and esteem.

Although of a slight figure, and pale features, which indicated a constitution by no means robust, Martin was remarked for his uncommon beauty; and indeed his fine, noble forehead, shaded by locks of soft brown hair, his large, expressive blue eyes, straight nose, with thin Grecian nostrils, and rather voluptuous mouth, entitled him in some measure to that consideration.

Martin was a great favorite with the ladies, old and young; but he never showed any marked partiality to any one, until he became intimate with the daughter of our late clergyman, Mr. Ashton.

This kind and excellent pastor—who ceased from suffering about a year ago, and went home

to his heavenly Father—was instructing Martin in Greek and Hebrew; and in his daily visits to the clergyman's house, the youth fell into an unhappy attachment for Isabella.

No two beings could be more different. Isabella was the most young and thoughtless girl in our village. She could have little sympathy with a person of such deep feelings and elevated intellect as Martin; and beautiful as she was, it seemed strange that he should have given his love to her. There is no doubt but she was attached to him; perhaps she loved him as well as she was capable of loving any one; but in this instance, as in all others, her affections were secondary to her love of sarcasm and mischief.

Martin and Isabella had been pointed out as lovers, by village gossips, for several months; he was now nineteen, and she was of the same age; when the tragedy occurred, which the tolling of the bell has recalled to my memory.

It was on an evening in the autumn of the year, that Isabella took advantage of the absence of her father to have a social gathering of young people at their house. Martin, of course, was present, with the fairest youths and maidens; and being under no restraint, from the gravity of the clergyman, who was not expected home till late, the company enjoyed themselves freely, with jests, songs and social games.

The hour at which such parties usually broke up, had already passed, and there was no relaxation in the gayety of the young people; when some one mentioned the subject of ghosts, something of that description having been reported as having been seen in the vicinity of the churchyard.

"It is a silly report," said Martin. "Nobody can believe that a ghost has really been seen there; and I doubt if a person here believes at all in the existence of ghosts."

"You do yourself; you know you do, Martin; although you are ashamed to own it," cried Isabella.

Martin only laughed.

"Come now," continued the thoughtless girl, "I can prove that you have some notion that such things may exist. Go to the grave-yard alone, in the dark, and then declare, if you can, that you felt no fear."

"And what would that prove?"

"Why, you will be frightened, though you should see nothing. Your fears would put your belief to the test. How could you be afraid, if you did not feel that there was something to be afraid of?"

"I do not think your logic is the best in the world," replied Martin, laughing. "Men are

often troubled with fear, when their reason tells them there is no cause to fear. But I deny, in the first place, that a journey to the grave-yard, even at midnight, would frighten me in the least."

"How bravely you can talk!" said Isabella, indulging in her customary tone of sarcasm. "But nobody here believes you. I don't, at any rate. Why, you hadn't courage enough, the other day, to help kill a calf; your mother told me so!"

"I never like to cause or to witness pain, if it can be avoided," answered Martin, blushing.

"Ha! ha! ha! what an excellent excuse! You are brave enough, to be sure; but tender-hearted! Come, now; you dare not go to the burying-ground this night, alone. You are not half so courageous as you would have us believe. Whether you think there are ghosts, or not; you are afraid of them."

Martin was extremely sensitive; but the sarcasm of nobody except Isabella could have stung him so to the quick. Scorning the imputation of cowardice, he was ready to do almost any desperate act to prove his courage.

"But," said he, "although I have no more fear of grave-yards and ghosts, than I have of orchards and apple trees, I am not going to walk half a mile, merely to be laughed at."

"Ha! ha! but you shall not escape so!" laughed Isabella. "Here before these our friends, I promise that this ring shall be yours"—displaying one given her by an old lover, which Martin had often desired her to part with—"provided you go to the grave-yard alone, in the dark, and declare on your honor, when you return, that you were not in the least afraid."

"Agreed," said Martin, buttoning his coat, for the night was chill.

"And as evidence that you go the entire distance, you can bring back with you the iron bar, which you will find close by the gate," said Isabella.

Thus driven by the taunts of his mistress to the commission of a folly, Martin took leave of the company, full of courage and spirit, and set out on his errand.

It was near a quarter of a mile to the grave-yard, which was approached by a lonely, dreary path, seldom travelled except by mourners.

It is impossible to relate precisely what happened to Martin, on that gloomy road. I judge from the circumstances which afterward came to light, and conjecture his adventure must have been as I am about to relate it.

Slight as he was in frame, and tender in his feelings, he was not destitute of courage. I do

not think he was frightened by the sighing of the wind, and the rustling of the dry autumnal leaves, as many stronger men might have been. He marched steadily to the grave-yard, stopped a moment, perhaps, to gaze sadly, but not fearfully, at the white tombstones gleaming faintly in the dark and desolate ground; for the stars shone brilliantly in the clear, cold sky; then shouldering the iron bar, of which Isabella had spoken, he set out to return.

He had proceeded about half way, when, in the gloomiest part of the road, he saw a white figure emerge from a clump of willows, and come toward him. It looked like a walking corpse, in a winding sheet, which trailed upon the ground. All Martin's strength of nerve was gone in an instant. Courage gave place to desperation. His hair standing erect, and his blood running chill with horror, still he stood his ground. The spectre drew nearer, seeming to grow whiter and larger as it approached. We cannot tell what frenzy seized upon the brain of the unhappy youth at that moment.

The guests at the clergyman's house heard terrific screams. Dreading some tragic termination to the farce, they rushed to the spot one

of the number carrying a lantern. They found Martin kneeling on a prostrate figure, his fingers clutching convulsively its throat, while he still uttered frantic shrieks for help. His wild features exhibited the very extremity of terror.

Only two of the most courageous young men dared approach him. One of them forced Martin to relax his hold on the throat of the figure, whilst the other tore away the folds of the sheet. At that moment the bearer of the lantern came up. Its light fell on the blood-stained, distorted features of Isabella. Martin uttered one more unearthly shriek, and fell lifeless on the corpse. He never spoke again; but lived—an idiot!

A frightful contusion on Isabella's temple bore evidence that in his frenzy he had struck the supposed spectre with the iron bar. The blow was probably the cause of her death; although such a grasp as his hands must have given her throat, might alone have deprived her of breath. He never knew afterward what he had done; for never a gleam of reason illumined the darkness of his soul; and now the tolling bell has told us that heaven, in its mercy, has finally freed the spirit from its shackles of clay, and given it life and light in a better world.